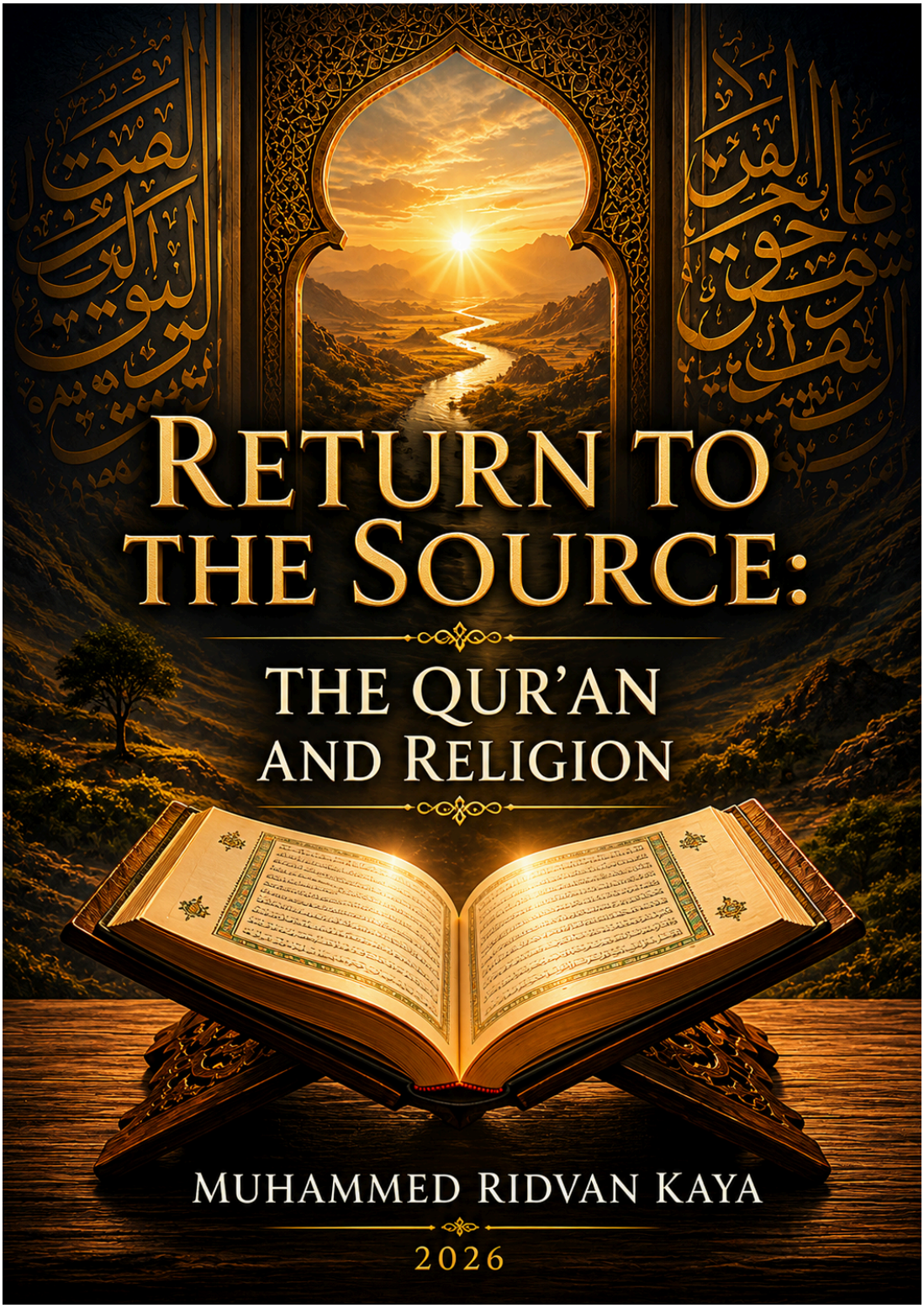
RETURN TO THE SOURCE:
THE QUR'AN AND RELIGION
MUHAMMED RIDVAN KAYA
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The Existence of God: An Ontological and Kalāmic Explanation

Philosophy's oldest and most profound question is this: Why is there something rather than nothing? This question arises not merely from curiosity but from a necessary orientation of reason itself. Everything that exists invites scrutiny of its existence. At the end of that scrutiny, reason either attempts to satisfy itself with an infinite chain of explanations, or it arrives at a first principle that brings the explanation to completion.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION OF EXISTENCE

What Is a Contingent Being?

Every existing thing first faces the following question: Was it necessary for this thing to exist, or could it equally have not existed? If a being's non-existence is conceivable — that is, if there is no logical necessity connecting its existence to its non-existence — then that being is a contingent being. The existence or non-existence of a stone generates no contradiction. The existence or non-existence of the solar system generates no contradiction either. Consequently, every object, every system, and every event we observe in the universe falls into the category of contingent being. The defining characteristic of a contingent being is this: it requires an explanatory cause outside itself in order to exist. It does not carry within itself sufficient grounds for its own existence; those grounds must come from without.

Originated Being: The Temporal Dimension

When a temporal dimension is added to the concept of contingent being, we arrive at originated being (muhdes). An originated being is one that came into existence at some point. Everything that was non-existent before it existed is an originated being. It is an observable fact that everything in the universe is subject to change. Change, however, does not signify continuity but renewal. Every renewal is the ending of a prior state and the beginning of a new one. Therefore, everything that changes came into existence at a particular moment, and the beginning of that existence requires an explanatory cause.

Necessary Being: The Necessity of the Concept

If each contingent being requires a cause, where does this chain of causes lead? Reason here faces two options:

First option: The chain of causes regresses infinitely. Each being is explained by the one before it, that one by the one before it, and so on without end; the chain never closes.

Second option: The chain terminates in a being that itself requires no cause — a being whose existence comes from itself alone.

The first option — infinite regress — appears to offer an explanation, but in reality it indefinitely defers the explanation. An infinite chain of explanations is equivalent to producing no explanation at all, because the totality of existence remains

ungrounded. Every link in the chain answers the question "why does this exist?" with "because of the preceding link," but this answer does not resolve the question; it merely transforms it into another question. Therefore, the most coherent and non-contradictory explanation is the acceptance of a Necessary Being whose existence comes from itself and which stands outside the chain of causes.

THE NECESSARY ATTRIBUTES OF THE NECESSARY BEING

The concept of the Necessary Being — called Wājib al-Wujūd in the Islamic kalām tradition — is not merely a conceptual inference. Certain attributes that this being must possess follow necessarily from within this concept itself.

Independence

The Necessary Being depends on nothing. For if it depended on anything, its existence would be contingent upon that thing. Dependence, however, nullifies necessity; a dependent being would be a contingent being. Therefore, the Necessary Being is entirely self-sufficient and independent.

Uniqueness

Is it possible for there to be more than one Necessary Being? No. If two distinct Necessary Beings existed, they would need to be distinguishable from one another. Every distinguishing feature, however, represents a limitation; and whatever is limited is contingent, not necessary. This contradiction makes it necessary for the Necessary Being to be singular.

Uncaused Nature

The Necessary Being is the initiator of the chain of causes; it therefore does not occupy a position within that chain. There is no "why" to its existence, because if it exists the explanation is complete, and if it does not exist no explanation is possible at all. This means its existence is uncaused — and here uncaused-ness is not a deficiency but an attribute that follows from the very definition of necessary existence.

Absolute Necessity

The non-existence of the Necessary Being cannot be explained by any chain of causes, because the chain of causes itself rests upon this being. Therefore, the non-existence of this being is logically impossible. Its existence is necessary; its non-existence is inconceivable.

THE CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE REQUIREMENT OF EXPLANATION

The Universe Is in a State of Change

Observation shows us this: everything in the universe is changing. Atoms alter their compositions, stars are born and die, living things grow and perish, galaxies expand. Change is the ending of one state and the beginning of another. Everything that begins was non-existent before it began. Therefore, everything in the universe came

into existence at a particular moment.

The Sum of the Universe's Parts Does Not Transcend the Universe

The universe is composed of contingent beings. If each contingent being requires an explanation, then their sum — the universe in its entirety — also requires an explanation. The property of dependence carried by each of the parts does not disappear in the aggregate. When a thousand beings, each in need of a cause for its existence, are brought together, that aggregate does not transform into a self-explanatory being.

The Insufficiency of Infinite Regress

To consign the explanation of the universe to an infinite chain of causes is to defer the explanation indefinitely. The problem with this approach is not epistemological but ontological: at no point in the chain is existence rescued from groundlessness. Every link draws its existence from the preceding one, that one from the one before it, and so on. At no point can one say, "This being carries within itself the power to exist." Consequently, the entirety of the chain remains ontologically suspended.

The Most Coherent Explanation

The most coherent and non-contradictory explanation that reason can reach is this: the existence of the universe rests upon a being outside itself whose existence is necessary. This is not a logical proof in the strict sense; it is the most internally consistent and robust among the available explanations. The universe came into existence, and the explanation for that origination is found not among contingent beings but in Wājib al-Wujūd.

THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLE OF REVELATION

The Limit of Reason

Reason can most coherently propose that the Necessary Being exists; but it cannot by itself definitively determine what that being is, what attributes it possesses, or what relationship it has with humanity. Reason shows that a first principle — necessary, singular, and uncaused — must exist. But that this principle possesses attributes such as knowledge, will, and power; that it entered history through revelation; that it created humanity and entrusted it with responsibility — these are not conclusions reason can derive on its own. They are truths disclosed by revelation.

The Function of Revelation

The Qur'an identifies the first principle reason arrives at — the Necessary Being — as God (Allah), and explains His attributes, His relationship with humanity, and His manifestation throughout history. In this sense, revelation is the complement of reason; it does not cancel reason but transcends it.

Reason says: There must be a Necessary Being.

Revelation adds: That Being is Allah; here are His attributes, here are His commands,

here is the path of relationship with Him.

This relationship is the essence of the kalām tradition: reason opens the door, and revelation enters.

The Limits of Certainty

No claim is being made here that the existence of God has been proven with logical necessity through reason alone. Rather, the following is being argued: the existence of God is the most coherent, least contradictory, and most comprehensive among the available explanations; this conclusion is reinforced and completed by revelation. For reason to claim "definitive proof" is for reason to exceed its own limits. Reason is at its strongest in the analysis of coherence: which explanation contains the fewest internal contradictions? Which explanation most completely encompasses the totality of existence? The answers to these questions point toward *Wājib al-Wujūd* — toward God.

COMBINED CONCLUSION

The universe exists. That existence demands explanation. The explanation is either deferred by an infinite regress or terminates in a being that itself requires no explanation. Infinite regress produces no explanation; therefore the coherent option is the acceptance of a Necessary Being whose existence comes from itself. This Necessary Being is, by necessity, singular, independent, uncaused, and inconceivable in its non-existence. All contingent beings — the entire universe included — are ontologically dependent upon this being; without it they can neither come into existence nor sustain their existence.

Reason reaches this conclusion. Revelation takes this conclusion, names it, and deepens it: this Necessary Being is Allah — the Creator of all things, the Sustainer of all things, the One to Whom all things ultimately return.

This is not a certificate of proof; it is a model of explanation. A model that reason accepts, revelation completes, and the kalām tradition has refined. Its purpose is to invite every reasoning person to this conclusion: when the totality of what exists is examined, the most coherent, most profound, and most comprehensive explanation is the existence of God.

A Comprehensive Rational Argument for the Existence of Allah

Human beings, from the very first moment of their existence, have been unable to stop themselves from asking the most fundamental question: "Why do I exist? Why does this universe exist? And is there a meaning, a will, behind this existence?" These questions gnaw not only at philosophers, but at scientists, artists, and ordinary people alike. Materialist thought has tried to confine these questions within the framework of "chance and natural laws." Yet no matter how far it advances, science has encountered new questions at every step, and ultimately the human mind has come face to face with this picture: The universe is too orderly to be explained by chance; matter is insufficient to explain consciousness; nothingness cannot produce anything. Here, the arguments supporting the existence of Allah will be examined one

by one, and then these arguments will be evaluated as a cumulative whole that mutually reinforces each other. The aim is not to claim a strict "laboratory proof," because the existence of Allah cannot be verified in a test tube like a chemical compound. The method applied here is for reason to read the signs, weigh the evidence, and arrive at the most reasonable and consistent explanation. In philosophy, this is called "inference to the best explanation."

THE FIRST CAUSE ARGUMENT — NOTHINGNESS CANNOT PRODUCE ANYTHING

The Principle of Causality

The most basic observation of daily life is this: everything has a cause. A stone falling to the ground is connected to gravity, a seed blossoming is connected to the sun and water, a war breaking out is connected to political tensions. Nothing that comes into being afterward exists on its own. This principle — "ex nihilo nihil fit," meaning "nothing comes from nothing" — has been one of the cornerstones of philosophy since ancient times. So where does the universe stand in relation to this principle?

The Beginning of the Universe

The Big Bang theory, one of the most powerful models of modern cosmology, reveals that the universe began expanding from an extraordinarily dense and hot singular point approximately 13.8 billion years ago. What is even more critical is this: not only matter and energy, but space and time also began to exist with this beginning. That is, the universe has a beginning. Something with a beginning has, by definition, "come into being afterward." Since everything that comes into being afterward must have a cause, the universe must also have a cause.

The second law of thermodynamics supports this: the universe is progressing toward ever greater disorder with each passing moment. If the universe had existed for eternity, it would have long since reached maximum entropy and been in a state of dead chaos. Yet we still have functioning stars, galaxies continuing to form, and a planet harboring life. This shows that the universe does not have an infinite past, but originates from a starting point.

The Paradox of Infinite Regress

Some materialists object as follows: "But then the cause of the universe must also have a cause, which must also have a cause... this goes on to infinity." However, this objection deepens the problem rather than solving it. An infinite regress — an infinite chain of causes — is logically impossible. Consider this: if A depends on B, B depends on C, C depends on D, and this chain has no beginning, then A can never come into existence. Just as a series of numbers that never begins can never reach a result. Therefore, this chain must stop somewhere — there must exist a first cause that itself has no cause, that is eternal and unchanging.

This first cause:

- Must be outside of time and space, because it is the one that created time and

space.

- Must not undergo change, because change requires time, and time is a concept it created.

- Must have a will, because for an existing universe to emerge from something non-existent, a decision to "act" is essential.

This being is what Islamic theology calls "Wajib al-Wujud" — Allah, whose existence is necessary.

Response to the Quantum Vacuum Objection

An argument is sometimes put forward as follows: "In quantum mechanics, particles spontaneously come into being from nothing; the universe may have come into being in the same way." This objection contains a serious misconception. The quantum vacuum is not nothingness in the true sense. It is an extremely rich environment containing quantum fields, energy potential, physical laws, and mathematical structure. Quantum fluctuations occur within the framework of these laws. In other words, the quantum vacuum is already a ground in which things exist. Before the Big Bang, however, space-time did not exist; therefore even the quantum vacuum itself requires a ground to exist upon. This pushes the question one step further and again raises the question: "Why do these laws exist?"

THE ARGUMENT FROM CREATION — ORDER CANNOT BE EXPLAINED BY CHANCE

The Fine-Tuning of the Universe

The fundamental physical constants of the universe are calibrated with incredible precision to permit life. A few examples:

- If the cosmological constant differed from its current value by a ratio of 10^{-120}, the universe would either expand too rapidly to allow galaxies to form, or collapse too quickly into a single mass.

- If the gravitational constant were slightly stronger, stars would burn out too quickly; if slightly weaker, they would never form.

- If the value of the electromagnetic force changed, chemical bonds could not form, atoms could not combine, and life would not be possible.

- If the strong nuclear force were different, protons and neutrons could not bind to each other and the atomic nucleus would disintegrate.

- The fine-structure constant, described by Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman as a "magic number," also falls into this category. Where it comes from and why it has this value remains unexplained.

To attribute these precisions to chance means relying on a probability of one in trillions upon trillions. In scientific thinking, the simplest and most consistent explanation is preferred. Is it a coincidence of one in trillions upon trillions, or a

conscious Designer? Reason clearly finds the latter far more consistent.

The Fine-Tuning of Earth

Not only the general constants of the universe, but Earth itself is extraordinarily calibrated for life:

- If Earth's distance from the Sun were a few million kilometers different, water would either completely evaporate or freeze.

- The oxygen ratio in the atmosphere is around twenty-one percent; if this ratio rose to thirty-five percent, forests would be in constant flames; if it dropped, respiration would become impossible.

- The mass of the Moon and its distance from Earth stabilizes tidal cycles and axial tilt, keeping the climate stable.

All of these are independent variables, and the fact that all of them are simultaneously at life-permitting values is a situation that far exceeds the bounds of chance.

DNA and Biological Information

DNA, which lies at the foundation of life, is the most complex information storage system known. In a single human cell, there are approximately three billion base pairs, and this sequence encodes how proteins are synthesized, how the cell divides, and how the organism develops. This code is so precise and meaningful that a single letter in the wrong place can cause serious diseases.

According to the fundamental principle of information theory, meaningful and functional information always originates from a mind. No physical process has ever produced meaningful information on its own. The letters in a book are ink, but the meaning lies in the specific arrangement of the letters, not in the chemical properties of the ink. Similarly, the chemical properties of the four bases in DNA do not explain why these bases carry meaning in that specific sequence. If even writing "Hello World" requires an act of will, the notion that the magnificent biological code that initiated all the complexity of life was not written by a Creator strains the limits of logic.

The Workings of the Cosmic Clock

The orbits of planets, the cycle of the Sun, the changing of seasons, and the motion of galaxies operate with millimetric precision. These enormous masses move like a clock mechanism without colliding with one another or deviating from their orbits. The fact that matter lacking its own consciousness operates in such a harmonious and balanced way points to the existence of an infinite knowledge and power that directs them. While even a mechanical clock has a maker, to argue that this cosmic clock has no founder and operator is to reverse the principles of reason.

The Mathematical Intelligibility of the Universe

The universe has a structure that is describable with mathematics in an extraordinary way. Einstein's field equations, the Schrödinger equation, Maxwell's equations, and quantum field theory describe vast dimensions of reality with a few pages of mathematics. This is extremely remarkable. Why does the universe have a mathematical structure? Why is it not random chaos? Why was the human mind created with the capacity to grasp this mathematical structure?

Mathematician and physicist Eugene Wigner called this "the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences." If the universe were the product of blind chance, there would be no reason for it to possess such a mathematical order, nor for the human mind to be capable of grasping that order. This mathematical harmony points to the universe having been encoded by an intelligent Designer.

THE ARGUMENT FROM CONSCIOUSNESS — MATTER IS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN THE MIND

The Mysterious Nature of Consciousness

Modern neuroscience has extremely detailed knowledge of the brain. It can largely map which neurons fire under which conditions and which region performs which function. However, it has yet to answer the following question: How do the chemical and electrical interactions of neurons transform into a subjective experience such as "seeing red" or "feeling pain"?

This problem is referred to in philosophy as the "hard problem of consciousness." No matter how thoroughly we explain physical processes, the question of how subjective experience — qualia — comes about remains inexplicable. Brain scans tell us which region is activated, but they cannot tell us "what it feels like at that moment."

If the universe consisted solely of matter, the emergence of conscious beings would not be expected — because pure matter cannot question itself, cannot produce meaning, and cannot harbor love, longing, or moral concern. A conscious Creator creating conscious beings is, by contrast, a consistent and intelligible explanation.

The Artificial Intelligence Analogy

Even the most advanced artificial intelligence systems of today require the design of engineers, the infrastructure of data centers, and algorithmic coding. Artificial intelligence cannot exist on its own. Moreover, these systems do not possess genuine consciousness or self-awareness; they merely imitate human intelligence.

The following question inevitably arises: If even artificial intelligence — a tool devoid of consciousness — requires conscious designers, does not the human being, who possesses self-awareness, seeks meaning, and harbors moral concern, along with the universe in which this human exists, require a far greater and more conscious Creator?

Quantum Mechanics and the Observer Problem

The observation problem in quantum theory gives rise to thought-provoking philosophical questions about the nature of consciousness. According to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, a particle is in a superposition of possible states until it is observed. At the moment of observation, the wave function collapses and the particle settles into a definite position. This interpretation places conscious observation in a central role in determining physical reality.

If conscious observation truly plays a critical role, the thought arises that in the early stages of the universe — before conscious beings like humans had yet emerged — an eternal and omnipresent consciousness would have been needed to assume that role. This discussion initiates a profound inquiry pointing to the idea that consciousness cannot be reduced to matter.

THE MORAL ARGUMENT — WHERE DOES CONSCIENCE COME FROM?

Universal Moral Intuitions

Despite the many cultural values that have varied across history and geography, certain moral intuitions have carried a nearly universal character. Chief among these are the sense that killing an innocent child is wrong, the expectation of justice, and the tendency to prefer good over evil.

These intuitions cannot be explained by social agreements alone, because social agreements are variable and, when based on the principle that "what the majority approves of is right," history has shown that even mass atrocities have been justified. So if there is an objective morality — if we are arguing that some things are genuinely wrong or right — what is the source of this objective morality? Objective morality cannot be derived from social agreement, because then it becomes relative. A transcendent Source of Morality — that is, Allah — provides the foundation for objective morality.

Human Nature

No matter how materialist an education a person has received, in the most difficult moments of their life they instinctively turn to a plea directed upward. This is a universal observation. Throughout history, nearly all societies have, in different ways, believed in and turned toward a transcendent being. The human desire for eternity, the sense of waiting for absolute justice, the search for meaning, and the inclination toward spirituality are not phenomena that can be explained merely as products of biological needs. The existence of a Creator who has placed these feelings within human beings and who is capable of responding to these desires offers the most consistent explanation.

THE ARGUMENT FROM KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING — WHY IS THE UNIVERSE INTELLIGIBLE?

The Problem of the Source of Knowledge

Everything in the universe can be viewed as an information system. The genetic code in DNA, the mathematical laws of physics, and the neural processing in the human

brain all possess specific rules, symmetries, and meaningful relationships. None of these consist of random chaos. Information is something different from pure matter. The letters in a book are ink, but meaning lies not in the chemical properties of the ink but in the informational pattern of the arrangement of letters.

Every information system presupposes an encoder and a decoder. DNA's code is read by ribosomes; physical laws are discovered by conscious observers. But these senders and receivers themselves depend on more fundamental information systems. To stop this regress, a necessary foundation that makes information possible is required. This Source — which does not itself require any other information system, which is both the rule-setter and the meaning-giver of all knowledge — must be a non-physical, eternal, and conscious being. This Source is Allah.

The Universality of the Search for Meaning

By nature, human beings seek meaning. They want not only to survive, but to understand why they are alive. This search has manifested throughout history in art, philosophy, religion, and science. If there were truly no meaning behind the universe, this search would be nothing more than an irrational delusion. Yet this search is both universal and extraordinarily powerful. The fact that the search for meaning is so deep-rooted and widespread points to the existence of an absolute source of meaning behind the universe.

THE UNSEEN AND THE LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE

The Limits of Human Knowledge

We can largely understand how the universe works. However, some questions go beyond the methods of science: Why is there something rather than nothing? How is consciousness possible? Is there an objective foundation for morality? These are philosophical and metaphysical questions that cannot be answered with a test tube.

The limitations of human knowledge are observed in concrete areas as well. In economics, no one knows gold prices with certainty — if they truly did, instead of offering predictions in the media, they would become among the world's wealthiest through investment in a short time. Fault line movements can be monitored in earthquakes, but the exact date and magnitude of an earthquake cannot be known in advance; if they could, everyone would be warned beforehand. Climate scientists present powerful data on general trends, but exactly when a famine will begin cannot be foreseen. Meteorology is the most reliable field of forecasting; yet certainty disappears in predictions beyond three days.

What these fields have in common is this: signs can be read, precautions can be taken, but the outcome cannot be known with certainty. This is precisely the truth expressed in verse 59 of Surah Al-An'am in the Quran: "The keys of the unseen are with Him alone; none knows them except Him." The unseen cannot be known, but signs can be read. This distinction is the expression of a truth that both honors and transcends the limits of knowledge.

The Difference Between a Sign and a Proof

The arguments relating to the existence of Allah do not carry the character of a coercive mathematical proof, nor do they need to. Because the existence of Allah is not a matter of proving a theorem; it is the most reasonable conclusion that reason arrives at when it holistically evaluates the universe, consciousness, morality, and meaning. Just as a historian reconstructs the past from documents, or a judge reaches a conclusion from circumstantial evidence, the function of reason here is also to weigh the existing signs and arrive at the most consistent explanation.

CUMULATIVE EVIDENCE AND THE MOST REASONABLE EXPLANATION

The arguments examined here are not independent of one another. Each looks at the same truth from a different window:

- The First Cause Argument points to the necessity of an eternal Creator, based on the beginning of the universe and the impossibility of infinite regress.

- The Argument from Creation demonstrates that the incredible fine-tuning of the universe, its mathematical order, and biological information cannot be explained by blind chance.

- The Argument from Consciousness shows that subjective experience cannot be reduced to matter, and that a conscious Creator creating conscious beings is consistent.

- The Moral Argument maintains that objective moral intuitions require a transcendent Source.

- The Argument from Knowledge and Meaning reveals that the intelligibility of the universe and the human search for meaning are incompatible with chance.

When all of these arguments are evaluated together, an extraordinarily powerful and consistent picture emerges. The materialist explanation encounters new questions at every step and requires ever more "unsubstantiated assumptions." The multiverse hypothesis, for example, is a speculation with no observational evidence whatsoever, produced solely to explain fine-tuning. By contrast, the hypothesis of an eternal, conscious, willful, and omniscient Creator explains the beginning of the universe, its order, its mathematical structure, its biological complexity, the existence of consciousness, objective morality, and the human search for meaning all within a single consistent framework.

When reason weighs the evidence, it prefers the simplest, most consistent, and most comprehensive explanation. That explanation is this: This universe did not come into being on its own. It was brought into existence by an eternal, conscious, and willful Creator. That Creator is Allah.

The unseen cannot be known with certainty. But signs can be read. And all of these signs point in the same direction.

Tawhid and Shirk in Islamic Belief: Meaning, Reflections, and Their Manifestations in Contemporary Life

The concepts of tawhid and shirk, which lie at the very center of Islamic belief, are the foundational elements that determine a Muslim's worldview, way of life, and relationship with God. These two concepts are not merely abstract principles of faith; they are also dynamic forces that find concrete expression in every area of daily life, shaping social relationships, economic choices, moral values, and individual behavior. Tawhid, meaning "to unify," refers to the absolute oneness of God, His incomparability, and His being free from any partnership of any kind. Shirk, derived from the root meaning "partnership," describes associating partners with God, attributing His attributes to other beings, and exalting beings that do not possess divine power. In the modern world, certain complexities and misunderstandings exist regarding the comprehension and practice of these concepts. In our age — shaped by technology, consumer culture, social media, and power dynamics — shirk can manifest in forms far more subtle and difficult to perceive than visible idol worship.

Tawhid: The Profound Meaning of God's Oneness

Philosophical and Theological Foundations of Tawhid

Tawhid is the fundamental creedal principle of Islam, expressed in the declaration "La ilaha illallah" (There is no god but God). Yet this declaration carries a deep ontological, epistemological, and practical meaning far beyond a mere verbal acknowledgment. Tawhid can be examined in three dimensions:

Tawhid al-Rububiyyah (Oneness of Lordship): Accepting that God is the Creator, the Provider, the Sustainer of the universe, and the true Owner of all existence. This dimension requires affirming God's absolute sovereignty over the cosmic order.

Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah (Oneness of Worship): Accepting that only God is to be worshipped, and that no other being is worthy of servitude or devotion. This means that all religious rituals, prayers, vows, and every form of worship must be directed solely to God.

Tawhid al-Asma wa al-Sifat (Oneness of Names and Attributes): Accepting that God's names and attributes are unique, and that no created being can fully possess His attributes. Attributes such as "Ghani" (free of need, all-sufficient), "Qadir" (all-powerful), and "Alim" (all-knowing) belong exclusively to Him.

The Psychological and Existential Dimension of Tawhid

The belief in tawhid liberates a person psychologically. A person who knows they are not bound to multiple authorities, powers, or deities experiences an existential peace and clarity. Being connected to a single center and a single principle makes one's life coherent, meaningful, and purposeful. Allegiance to multiple authorities, on the other hand, leaves a person in constant conflict, anxiety, and uncertainty. What modern psychology identifies as "value conflict" or "cognitive dissonance" is, in essence, a psychological reflection of the absence of tawhid.

The Hidden Faces of Shirk in Modern Times

In our day, shirk takes forms that are more abstract and psychological than the worship of idols made of stone and wood:

The Deification of Materialism: Making worldly values such as money, property, status, and career the center of one's life, and attributing absolute power and meaning to them, is a form of shirk. When a person makes the desires of the self and worldly goals their sole purpose in life, they have effectively elevated those things to the position of a deity.

The Idolization of Individuals: Elevating social figures, leaders, celebrities, or ideological pioneers to positions where they cannot be criticized, their errors cannot be seen, and their words are accepted as absolute truth is also a manifestation of shirk.

Dependency on Social Approval: In the age of social media, the tendency to measure one's worth by likes, follower counts, and the approval of others can be considered a form of modern shirk. When a person places the approval of others at the center rather than God's pleasure, they perform their acts of worship and conduct with riya (ostentation), which is itself a form of shirk.

The Balance of Tawhid and Shirk in Daily Life

Tawhid Consciousness in Economic Relations

The economic teachings of Islam are shaped around the principle of tawhid. Knowing that the true owner of provision is God protects a person from both arrogance and excessive anxiety and fear. Wealth should not be seen as the result of one's own power and intelligence alone; this leads to arrogance and ingratitude. The Quran recounts the story of Qarun as a warning against this danger. Qarun attributed his wealth to his own knowledge and ability, denying God's grace, and this led to his destruction. Likewise, poverty is also a trial, and it requires trust in the wisdom of God in the distribution of provision. A person who knows that provision lies only in God's hands experiences neither arrogance in wealth nor despair in poverty. This awareness also plays a critical role in securing social justice: when the wealthy know that the true owner of their wealth is God, they become more generous in giving zakat, charity, and aid; the poor, in turn, become patient and grateful.

Tawhid in Family and Social Relations

Family relationships are one of the most sensitive arenas in which the balance of tawhid and shirk is tested. Making parents, spouses, or children the center of one's life, and placing their desires above God's commands, is a form of shirk. A person may love their family and loved ones and value them, but this love must not surpass love for and obedience to God. As stated in Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 8, if parents command one to associate partners with God, one must not obey them in that matter: "And We have enjoined upon man to be good to his parents. But if they strive to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you of what you used to do." (Al-Ankabut,

8)

Tawhid in Professional and Career Life

In the modern business world, the misconception is widespread that success and promotion depend solely on one's own efforts. Tawhid consciousness, while acknowledging the importance of one's work, reminds us that the outcome lies only in God's decree. This understanding both prevents psychological problems such as excessive ambition and stress, and protects a person from despair in times of failure. Furthermore, employers looking down on their employees, belittling them, or thinking that the employees exist solely by their own grace is also a manifestation of arrogance and shirk. In reality, both the employer's capital and the worker's labor are gifts of God. This awareness encourages justice, compassion, and humility in professional relationships.

Tawhid in Knowledge and Education

The balance of tawhid and shirk is also important in the fields of science and education. Thinking that the source of knowledge is solely the human intellect means leaving God out of the equation. In Islam, the source of all knowledge is God, and a person can only acquire knowledge by His permission. The story of the Prophet Moses with a wise man in the Quran (Surah Al-Kahf) teaches that human knowledge is limited and that one must submit to God's infinite knowledge. In modern secular education systems, science and religion are frequently separated, and science is elevated to absolute authority. Yet from an Islamic perspective, science is a means of understanding God's creation and cannot be thought of apart from tawhid consciousness. The scientist must not forget that behind the laws and order they discover lies a Creator.

Social Consequences of Shirk

The Breakdown of Social Justice

Shirk directly affects social order and justice. Societies that do not acknowledge God's sovereignty, that regard certain people or groups as superior, and that attribute a divine status to them become prone to injustice and oppression. Throughout history, pharaohs, kings, and dictators have oppressed and exploited their people by elevating themselves to a divine position. Pharaoh's declaration in the Quran — "I am your highest lord" (Surah An-Naziat, 24) — is the pinnacle of this kind of arrogance and shirk. In the contemporary world as well, ideologies such as racism, nationalism, and class discrimination are manifestations of shirk in the form of seeing certain groups as superior to others. The belief in tawhid, on the other hand, emphasizes that all people are equal before God, and that superiority can only come through taqwa (God-consciousness).

Environmental Destruction and the Loss of Tawhid Consciousness

Environmental destruction is one of the most serious problems of the modern age, and at the root of this problem lies a form of shirk as well. The belief that humans are the absolute owners of nature and can exploit it as they wish means disregarding

God's ownership over creation. Tawhid consciousness reminds us that the human being is not the owner but the steward of nature, and must show respect for the order God has created and use it in a balanced way.

Ways to Guard Against Shirk: Practical Suggestions

Continuous Self-Examination and the Discipline of the Self

The most dangerous aspect of shirk is that it silently seeps into hearts. For this reason, a Muslim must continuously engage in self-examination, question their intentions, and monitor the motivations behind their actions. The question "Am I doing this for God's pleasure, or to show off to others?" is a critical one in guarding against ostentation and shirk.

A Continuous Relationship with the Quran

The Quran is the purest source of the message of tawhid. Regularly reading the Quran with its meaning, learning its interpretation, and applying it to life are among the most effective means of protection from shirk. In many of the Quran's verses, the oneness of God is emphasized, various forms of shirk are criticized, and the beauty of tawhid is conveyed. Remaining in continuous contact with these messages purifies the heart from shirk.

A Healthy Circle of Knowledge and Companionship

A person's environment directly influences their faith. Being in the company of people who possess tawhid consciousness, who fear God, and who avoid shirk strengthens one's own faith.

The Effort to Preserve Sincerity (Ikhlas)

Ikhlas means performing deeds solely for God's pleasure, and it is at the heart of guarding against shirk. Effort must be made to preserve ikhlas in every act of worship, every good deed, and even every thought. Even when giving a simple act of charity, the thought "May people see me as generous" undermines ikhlas and turns the deed into ostentation.

Tawhid, Freedom, and the Search for Meaning

The concepts of tawhid and shirk are not merely theological discussions; they are vital matters at the very center of the human existential search. Tawhid brings a person to true freedom, because it liberates them from the dominion of created things and connects them solely to the Creator. Shirk, on the other hand, enslaves a person — subjecting them to matter, to other people, to desires, and to transient values. In the contemporary world, visible idols have been replaced by invisible ones. Money, fame, power, knowledge, ideologies, and even the desires of one's own self can become idols. For this reason, preserving tawhid consciousness requires more careful attention, diligence, and a constant state of wakefulness than ever before.

Tawhid is not merely saying "God is one" — it is reflecting that reality into every moment and every domain of life. This must manifest itself in our economic choices,

our social relationships, our family life, our career goals, our relationship with the environment, and most importantly in the intentions within our hearts. A Muslim who lives with this consciousness finds peace in this world and attains salvation in the hereafter. Tawhid is a divine blessing that gives meaning to life, brings tranquility to the heart, delivers justice to society, and leads a person to true freedom. To live free from shirk and upon tawhid should be every believer's greatest aspiration.

The Deification of Power and Authority: The Transformation of Idolatry from Pharaoh's People to the Present Day

One of the fundamental principles of Islam, the concept of tawhid, emphasizes that worship belongs to Allah alone. Yet when we examine human history, we see that societies and individuals have continuously deviated from this principle, deifying material and spiritual elements such as power, wealth, and authority. The story of Pharaoh's people, as told in the Quran, offers one of the most striking examples of this deviation.

Pharaoh's Claim to Divinity and Social Manipulation

Pharaoh is one of the most openly self-proclaimed divine rulers known in history. The declaration conveyed in the Quran as "I am your highest lord" (Surah An-Nazi'at, 24) is not merely a display of arrogance, but the foundation of a systematic mechanism of social control. Pharaoh consolidated his rule in Egypt not only through military and economic power, but by constructing a spiritual authority. This demonstrates that power does not rest on physical force alone — it also requires controlling the minds and beliefs of the people. By presenting himself as a god, Pharaoh reshaped all of society's values around himself. This is a method used by totalitarian regimes: to sanctify power in order to make it absolute.

The Role of the Elites Around Pharaoh

Among those who accepted Pharaoh's claim to divinity were not only the ignorant masses, but also the elite strata of society. The verse in Surah Al-Qasas (28:38) — "O chiefs, I know of no god for you other than me" — shows the domination Pharaoh held over the state bureaucracy and aristocracy. This reveals an important truth: worship of false gods is most often built upon relationships of self-interest. The elites around Pharaoh secured their own positions by accepting his divinity and maintained their material and spiritual privileges. This was not so much a rational choice as the outcome of a pragmatic calculation of interest. The example of Haman illustrates this clearly. As Pharaoh's chief vizier and closest supporter, Haman did not hesitate to endorse his master's claim to divinity. This shows how circles of interest surrounding those in power function to legitimize and spread injustice.

The Idolization of Power and Authority: A Social Delusion

The condition of Pharaoh's people shows how humans tend to revere visible, tangible power and how they fall into the error of treating it as absolute. Societies that cannot — or will not — grasp Allah's infinite might fall into the trap of accepting whatever concrete power they see before them as the ultimate authority. As conveyed in Surah

Hud: "And We certainly sent Moses with Our signs and a clear authority. To Pharaoh and his establishment, but they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided." (Surah Hud, 96–97). These verses emphasize the danger of a society losing its capacity for rational thought and surrendering blindly to authority.

The Deceptive Nature of Power

Pharaoh's power was, in reality, a temporary means granted to him by Allah's permission. Yet Pharaoh and his people, mistaking this temporary power for something absolute, met with catastrophe in both this world and the next. The story of Pharaoh drowning in the sea is the most vivid example of the truth that no human authority, however powerful it may appear, can stand before Allah. This lesson applies equally to contemporary societies. Economic superpowers, military empires, and technology giants — however mighty they may seem — ultimately exist by Allah's permission and cease to exist by His will. The fall of every great empire throughout history is evidence of this truth.

The Multi-Dimensional Nature of Idolatry

As seen in the dialogue between the Prophet Ibrahim and his people, idolatry is not limited to the worship of physical statues. The verses in Surah Al-Anbiya — "When he said to his father and his people, 'What are these statues to which you are devoted?' They said, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.'" (Surah Al-Anbiya, 52–53) — show that idolatry is, at its core, a conceptual error.

The Values Represented by Idols

In ancient societies, idols represented various values and forces:

- Gods of Power and Victory: Symbolized military success and dominance

- Gods of Fertility and Wealth: Represented expectations of economic prosperity and abundance

- Gods of Love and Beauty: Reflected a value system built around sexuality and physical attraction

- Gods of Nature: Demonstrated submission to natural forces beyond human control

These idols were, in essence, the embodied forms of people's own desires, fears, and value systems. If people wanted power, they worshipped the god of power; if they wanted wealth, they worshipped the god of wealth. In other words, they were ultimately worshipping their own desires. The Quran expresses this as: "Have you seen he who has taken as his god his own desire?" (Surah Al-Furqan, 43). This verse shows that at the heart of idolatry lies the deification of the self's desires.

Modern Idolatry: The False Gods of Contemporary Societies

In today's world, while the worship of physical idols has largely disappeared, idolatry itself continues in different forms. Modern humans do not bow before statues of

stone and wood, but before abstract concepts and ideologies.

The Idolatry of Economic Power and Capitalism

One of the most prevalent idols of the modern age is money. In the capitalist system, money has ceased to be merely a medium of exchange and has become something virtually worshipped. People dedicate their entire lives to earning money, and for its sake may abandon moral values, neglect their families, and sacrifice their health. The Quran addresses this as follows: "Woe to every scorner and mocker. Who collects wealth and continuously counts it. He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal." (Surah Al-Humazah, 1–3). Here, attention is drawn to the delusion of those who absolutize wealth and attribute excessive value to it.

The Deification of Political Ideologies

The 20th century was the era in which ideologies caused their most destructive effects. Fascism, communism, and various nationalist movements ceased to be merely political viewpoints and became dogmas demanding an almost religious devotion. Under these ideologies, leaders were deified, their every word accepted as absolute truth, and dying for them considered the highest virtue. The cults surrounding Stalin, Hitler, and Mao are no different from Pharaoh's self-proclamation of divinity. Even if they never explicitly declared "I am God," the value attributed to them by society placed them in a position beyond the human.

The Question of Kemalism and the Cult of Leadership

In Turkey, the ideology of Kemalism has undergone a similar transformation. Over time, the cult formed around Atatürk took on a form that is problematic from an Islamic standpoint. "Commitment to Atatürk's principles and revolutions" moved beyond being a civic duty and became, in effect, an article of faith. His words were presented as unquestionable dogma, his ideas as unchallengeable truths. This contradicts Islam's fundamental principle that "every human being can err — only Allah is infallible." What is even more problematic is that, in certain circles, devotion to Atatürk has come to replace the devotion that should be directed to Allah. Situations such as his portrait being hung in more prominent places in homes than the name of Allah, his commemoration ceremonies being conducted with greater care than acts of worship, and the reverence shown at ceremonies held in his name surpassing that shown in mosques — all point toward a form of idolatry. This criticism does not mean denying Atatürk's historical role. However, no human being — no matter how great the deeds they have accomplished — can be deified. In Islam, even the prophets were not deified; their humanity was consistently emphasized: "Say: I am only a man like you." (Surah Al-Kahf, 110).

Popular Culture and the Celebrity Cult

Another form of modern idolatry is the excessive value attributed to celebrities and popular culture figures. Musicians, athletes, actors, and social media influencers have become figures venerated by millions of followers. People imitate their lifestyles, accept their every word as truth, spend fortunes on them, and wait for

hours just to catch a glimpse of them. These behaviors are modern forms of idolatry, because the value attributed to these individuals has surpassed human bounds and reached an almost sacred dimension.

The Idolatry of Technology and Science

Science and technology have become some of the most prominent idols of the contemporary world. Without denying the value of the scientific method and technological progress, absolutizing them and believing that they can explain everything is a form of idolatry. The mindset of "whatever science says, that is the truth" turns science into an unquestionable authority. Yet science is a human activity — one that is constantly evolving, capable of error, and inherently incomplete. Throughout history, scientific "truths" accepted as certain in one era have been proven wrong in the next. To absolutize science, therefore, means to place it in the position of Allah. Similarly, excessive reliance on technology and the belief that "technology will solve everything" is a form of idolatry. While developments in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and space technology are exciting, believing that they will resolve all of humanity's problems is to ignore Allah's omnipotence.

The Psychological and Sociological Foundations of Idolatry

Behind humanity's tendency toward idol worship lie various psychological and sociological reasons.

The Need to Escape Uncertainty

Human beings are uncomfortable with uncertainty. The complexity of life, the unknowability of the future, and the reality of death generate anxiety. To escape this anxiety, people seek to hold onto things that are concrete, visible, and comprehensible. Physical idols in ancient times — or in the modern age, concepts such as money, power, and ideology — provide this concreteness. Islam, however, calls people away from such false sources of security and toward the true source of security, which is Allah. "Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Surah Ar-Ra'd, 28) expresses this truth.

The Pressure of Social Conformity

As seen in the example of Pharaoh's people, humans often turn to idolatry due to social pressure. The phrase "We found our fathers doing this" (Surah Al-Anbiya, 53) shows how blind adherence to tradition leads to idolatry. A similar dynamic exists in modern societies. The pressure to conform to the capitalist system, consumer culture, and popular culture pushes people to accept these values without question. The logic of "everyone does it" leads to the erosion of moral and religious values.

Relationships of Self-Interest

As illustrated by the example of the elites surrounding Pharaoh, relationships of self-interest are among the most powerful motivators of idolatry. To protect their material and spiritual interests, people support certain systems and values even when they know them to be wrong. Today as well — businesspeople who hesitate to criticize the

capitalist system, bureaucrats who prop up oppressive regimes, intellectuals who remain silent in the face of unjust orders — are all modern versions of Pharaoh's inner circle.

The Path Out of Idolatry: Tawhid

The belief in tawhid brought by Islam is the strongest protection against all forms of idolatry. Tawhid does not merely mean acknowledging the existence of Allah — it means worshipping Him alone, fearing Him alone, and trusting in Him alone.

Correctly Understanding Allah's Omnipotence

The root cause of idolatry is the failure to fully comprehend Allah's omnipotence. Had Pharaoh's people truly understood Allah's power, they would not have worshipped the temporary and limited power of Pharaoh. Likewise, if modern humans fully grasp that Allah's power is infinite, that He is the Creator and Controller of all things, they will not place excessive value on transient things like money, power, and fame. Allah's omnipotence is emphasized repeatedly in the Quran. Such verses correct human perspective and reveal how limited human powers truly are.

The Correct Attitude Toward Worldly Goods

Islam does not reject worldly possessions entirely, but forbids placing excessive value on them. Wealth and property are a blessing from Allah and a means of trial. Used for good, they are a source of merit; used for evil, a source of sin. But they must never be deified.

Critical Thinking and Breaking Free from Imitation

Islam rejects blind imitation and calls upon humanity to think and reason. The Quran repeatedly contains expressions such as "Do you not use your intellect?" and "Do you not reflect?" The path out of idolatry lies in critical thinking — questioning every value accepted by society, family, and one's environment, and checking whether it is in conformity with Allah's commands. The mindset of "we found our fathers doing this" perpetuates idolatry.

The story of Pharaoh and his people is not a historical event confined to the past — it is a warning equally relevant to the present. Throughout human history, the forms of idolatry have changed, but its essence has remained the same: attributing divine value to something other than Allah. In today's world, physical idols have given way to ideologies, the obsession with wealth, cults of leadership, fascination with technology, and popular culture. But all of these are different manifestations of the same fundamental error.

Islam's message of tawhid is a call to shatter all of these idols. To worship Allah alone, to trust in Him alone, to fear Him alone, and to never absolutize any human power — this is the essence of that message.

For societies to attain a sound religious and moral structure:

1. Emphasis on tawhid in educational systems: Children should be taught from an

early age that nothing is greater than Allah.

2. Developing a culture of critical thinking: Society must be afforded the freedom to question all ideas, ideologies, and traditions.

3. Combating the cult of leadership: It must be emphasized that no political, religious, or cultural leader should be regarded as infallible.

4. Strengthening spiritual values against materialism: People must be reminded that money, power, and fame are transient, and that what is truly valuable is the reward of the hereafter.

5. Individual conscience against the pressure of social conformity: People should be encouraged to act not according to the logic of "everyone does it," but according to conscience and faith.

The fate of Pharaoh and his people shows what becomes of those who worship something other than Allah. Pharaoh, drowned in the sea, was rendered powerless before Allah despite all his might, his army, and his treasures. This stands as a lesson for every age's Pharaohs and their followers. The duty of Muslims today is to avoid every form of modern idolatry and to place the belief in tawhid at the center of their lives. For salvation lies only in living the true meaning of "La ilaha illallah" — there is no god but Allah.

Shirk and Mushrik in the Quran: The Social Dimensions of Religious Deviation

The Holy Quran is a divine book sent as a guide to humanity. While its verses explain principles covering every aspect of life, it also draws a clear and definitive line on matters of faith. The most fundamental element of this line is tawhid — the belief in the oneness of God. The concept standing in opposition to tawhid, and frequently criticized in the Quran, is shirk. Shirk means associating partners with God, failing to recognize His unique power and oneness.

The Concept of Shirk and Its Foundations

The word shirk means "to associate, to equate" in Arabic. In Islamic literature, shirk refers to attributing partners to God in His essence, attributes, or actions — behaving as though His unique authority is shared with other beings. This is the greatest violation of God's oneness and uniqueness.

In the Quran, polytheists (mushrikun) are not depicted as people who deny God's existence; rather, they are people who accept that God exists but attribute various intermediaries, intercessors, or partners to Him. This is an important distinction, because polytheism is not outright denial but a corrupted and distorted version of faith.

The root cause of shirk is failing to truly know God and being unable to fully appreciate His power. In Surah Al-An'am (6:91), it is stated: "They did not appraise God with true appraisal." This verse points to the lack of knowledge and understanding at the root of shirk. When a person cannot truly know their Creator,

cannot grasp His absolute power, they come to feel a need for intermediaries and means.

The Belief System of Mushrik

In the Quran, mushrik do not appear as communities with a homogeneous belief, but as different groups who adopt various deviant beliefs. However, what all these groups share is that they associate partners with God even while believing in Him.

The Belief in Intercessors

One of the most common beliefs among mushrik is the idea of maintaining intermediaries or intercessors between themselves and God. This belief is refuted in Surah Yunus (10:18): "They worship besides God things that neither harm nor benefit them, and they say: These are our intercessors with God. Say: Are you informing God of something He does not know in the heavens or on earth? Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him."

This verse highlights the logical error of the polytheists. Can there be an intermediary that God does not know about, one that He has a need for? In the face of God's absolute knowledge and power, it is impossible for any being to add something to Him or assist Him. When polytheists regard their idols or other beings as intercessors, they are in fact limiting God's power and implying He is deficient.

Sanctifying Hadith, Schools of Thought, and Clergy

When the concept of mushrik is evaluated in a contemporary context, it is possible to see manifestations beyond the mere worship of idols. Accepting hadith, the words of school-of-law imams, and the opinions of religious scholars uncritically and without comparison to the Quran — treating these texts and individuals as equivalent to or superior to God's word — can also be considered a form of shirk.

The Quran makes clear that no human authority can replace God's revelation. Surah An-Nahl (16:89) states: "And We will bring you as a witness over these. And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims."

This verse emphasizes that the Quran is a book that "clarifies all things." If the Quran clarifies everything, the need to seek additional sources or to relegate it to a secondary position disappears. Placing hadith, schools of jurisprudence, or the words of religious scholars above or equal to the Quran — or adopting them as a second source — amounts in practice to associating partners with God's word.

The Worship Understanding of Polytheists

The deviation in the polytheists' belief system is also reflected in their worship practices. The Quran notes that polytheists performed various religious rituals and even circumambulated the Kaaba. However, because these acts of worship were not performed with sincere devotion to God alone, they are invalid.

Surah At-Tawbah (9:28) states: "O you who have believed, indeed the mushrik are

unclean, so let them not approach the Sacred Mosque after this, their final year."

This verse states that polytheists are not spiritually clean, and therefore have no right to approach sacred spaces. The important point here is not physical cleanliness but purity of belief. No matter how many acts of worship are performed, no matter how many prayers are recited, if the heart has not been purified by the belief in tawhid, these acts of worship are not accepted before God.

The concept of ikhlas (sincerity) is an indispensable condition for the acceptance of worship in Islam. Ikhlas means performing worship solely for God, solely to earn His pleasure. Mushrik, because they also direct their worship toward their idols, intermediaries, and intercessors, lack sincerity.

The Psychology of Mushrik: Denial and Self-Deception

The Quran also provides important clues about the psychological state of mushrik. In Surah Al-An'am, the situation of mushrik on the Day of Judgment is described as follows: "And on the Day We will gather them all together, then We will say to those who associated others with God, 'Where are your 'partners' that you used to claim?' Then there will be no response from them except that they say, 'By God, our Lord, we were not of those who associated others with God.'"

These verses show that polytheists flee from confronting reality and deceive themselves. While associating partners with God in this world, they will deny it on the Day of Reckoning. This demonstrates that shirk is not merely a religious deviation but also a psychological mechanism of denial. Mushrik, even if they know deep down that their beliefs are wrong, do not want to admit it — because doing so would mean questioning the beliefs they inherited from their ancestors, beliefs that form the foundation of their social structure.

In Surah Sad (38:4–8), this situation is described: "And they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves, and the disbelievers say, 'This is a magician and a liar. Has he made the gods into one God? Indeed, this is a strange thing.'"

In these verses, the reaction of polytheists upon hearing the message of tawhid is striking. The question "Has he made the gods into one God?" shows how accustomed they were to polytheism. The community leaders encouraged the people to remain attached to their traditional beliefs. A sociological reality also emerges here: polytheism is not merely an individual deviation, but also a social structure — and there are power centers that want to preserve this structure.

The Social Dimensions of Shirk

Mushrik, beyond being an individual doctrinal deviation, is also a phenomenon that affects social structure. Throughout history, certain common characteristics have been observed in societies where shirk has been dominant.

Social Injustice

In societies where shirk prevails, religious authorities hold great power and influence.

The custodians of idols, shrines, and sacred places acquire economic and political power through these structures. The people, by placing intermediaries between themselves and God, become materially and spiritually dependent on these intermediaries. This creates fertile ground for social injustice and exploitation.

The polytheists of Mecca gained great prestige and economic income as custodians of the Kaaba. The existence of idols sustained their privileged position. The tawhid message brought by the Prophet Muhammad threatened not only the religious but also the social and economic structure. For this reason, the leaders of Mecca fiercely resisted the tawhid message.

Moral Collapse

Shirk also leads to the deterioration of moral values. In a society that does not truly know God, does not fear Him, and does not believe in His justice, moral values also weaken. People come to fear social norms, traditions, or powerful individuals rather than God. In polytheist societies, moral failures such as the burying alive of infant girls, slavery, usury, and oppression were widespread — consequences of failing to truly comprehend God's justice and mercy.

The belief in tawhid ensures that people fear only God and know they will be accountable before Him alone, and this creates a powerful moral conscience.

The Spread of Superstitions

In societies where shirk dominates, superstitions and unfounded beliefs spread rapidly. Polytheists place trust not in God's revelation but in the traditions of their ancestors, fabricated stories, fortune-tellers, astrologers, and prophecies. This also hinders the intellectual development of society.

The Quran frequently emphasizes that polytheists blindly imitated their ancestors. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:170) states: "And when it is said to them, 'Follow what God has revealed,' they say, 'Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing.' Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?" This verse draws attention to the dangers of blind adherence to tradition.

Contemporary Manifestations of Shirk

Shirk is not merely a historical phenomenon confined to the past. It continues to manifest in different forms today. In the modern age, shirk sometimes appears not as overt idol worship but in more covert and sophisticated ways.

Sanctifying Religious Scholars

In some societies, the words of religious scholars have become unquestionable dogmas. People, rather than reading and understanding the Quran themselves, accept the interpretations of clerics as absolute truth. This amounts in practice to placing those scholars in a position equal to or superior to God's revelation.

The Quran clearly states that no human being should be taken as a lord. Surah Al Imran (3:64) states: "Say: O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable

between us and you — that we will not worship except God and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of God."

Veneration of Shrines and Graves

In some Muslim societies, excessive sanctity is attributed to shrines and graves. People seek help from those buried there, make requests of them, and offer sacrifices to them. These behaviors amount to granting those individuals a share of God's authority and fall within the scope of shirk. Asking something of a deceased saint, praying to them, supplicating to them, means seeking refuge in a power other than God. Yet the Quran clearly states that the dead do not hear and possess no power. Surah Fatir (35:22) states: "Not equal are the living and the dead. Indeed, God causes to hear whom He wills, but you cannot make hear those in the graves."

Deifying Ideologies and Leaders

In the modern age, some people virtually deify political ideologies, leaders, or celebrities. Everything such people say is accepted as true; they cannot be criticized; they are obeyed blindly. This amounts to placing that person or ideology in the place of God. The Quran emphasizes that absolute obedience can only be given to God, and that if a human being commands something outside of God's command, they should not be obeyed.

The Path to Liberation from Shirk: Return to the Quran

The Quran clearly states that the only way to be freed from shirk and to find the right path is to return to the Quran. As noted in Surah An-Nahl (16:89), the Quran is a book that is "a clarification for all things, and guidance and mercy and good tidings." If a person wishes to truly know God, they must turn to His revelation — the Quran. The Quran describes God's attributes, power, justice, and mercy in the most beautiful way. A person who learns about God through the Quran feels no need to associate partners with Him.

Tawhid is the core message of the Quran. Every messenger conveyed the same message to their people: "Worship God; there is no deity except Him." This message is the essence of Islam and is emphasized on every page of the Quran.

Taking the Quran as a guide does not mean merely reciting it, but understanding it, reflecting deeply on it, and applying it to life. A person who lives by the Quran remains distant from shirk, preserves the belief in tawhid, and earns God's pleasure.

Shirk is the one sin that Islam rejects most strongly and that the Quran states will not be forgiven. The Quran addresses the belief systems, worship practices, and social effects of mushrik in detail. Throughout history, shirk has manifested in different forms: sometimes as overt idol worship, sometimes as the sanctification of religious scholars, sometimes as the veneration of shrines, and sometimes as the deification of ideologies and leaders. Yet all these forms share a common point — they cast a shadow over the oneness and uniqueness of God.

The only way to be freed from shirk and to find the right path is to return to the Quran.

The Quran introduces God correctly and explains His power and oneness in the most beautiful way. A person who takes the Quran as their guide remains distant from all forms of shirk and attains a sincere belief in tawhid. The danger of shirk continues today, and Muslims need to review their beliefs in the light of the Quran and avoid all its hidden and overt forms — for it is only through the belief in tawhid that it is possible to attain God's pleasure and earn salvation in the hereafter.

The Path to Salvation from Fanaticism and Associating Partners with God

Introduction

The human being is a creature in search of meaning. This search is one of the most fundamental instincts that directs them toward their Creator. Religion is a universal guide that gives meaning to human life in response to this search and steers people morally and spiritually. However, deviating from the essence of religion, misunderstanding it, or clouding it with superstitions can plunge a person into a deep spiritual crisis rather than leading them to the peace and perfection they seek. The most prominent manifestations of these deviations are embodied in the concepts of fanaticism and associating partners with God

Fanaticism: The Abandonment of Reason and the Chains of Blind Imitation

Fanaticism, in its literal meaning, refers to clinging blindly to something and following it without question. In a religious context, fanaticism means living according to fabricated prohibitions and rules that are not grounded in the true sources of religion, without passing them through the filter of reason and logic. A fanatical attitude focuses on outward appearances, formalism, and social acceptance rather than grasping the essence of religion.

Throughout history, in many societies, rules imposed in the name of religion but not actually prescribed by it have distanced people from a true religious understanding. People who are known among the public as "devout" — who pray and fast — yet who do not grasp the deep meaning behind these acts of worship, and who see them as a means of prestige or social status, are the victims of this fanatical understanding. For such people, religion has ceased to be a philosophy of life and a path of drawing closer to God; it has been reduced to rituals and become an empty shell.

Fanaticism disables the intellect, one of humanity's most precious gifts. In the Quran, God repeatedly asks: "Will you not reason?", "Will you not reflect?", "Will you not take heed?" These questions clearly show that religion must walk alongside reason and contemplation. Yet the fanatical person, ignoring this divine call, accepts without question everything they have seen from their ancestors or society. This is criticized in the Quran as follows:

> "And when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger,' they say, 'Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers.' Even though their fathers knew nothing nor were rightly guided?" (Al-Ma'idah, 104)

This verse emphasizes the danger of blind imitation and the importance of reason. Rather than considering every tradition from the past as sacred, a person must

evaluate them in the light of the revelation sent down by God.

Fanaticism also opens the door to ostentation and hypocrisy. A person who has not grasped the inner meaning of religious rituals performs them in order to gain respect in society, to be praised, or to avoid criticism. Yet Islam places purity of heart and sincerity above all else.

Mushrik: The Dimensions of Associating Partners with God

Mushrik is defined in Islam as the greatest sin. Shirk, simply put, means associating partners with God and denying His uniqueness and majesty. However, mushrik has many dimensions, and some of them are so subtle that a person can fall into this trap without realizing it.

The most obvious form of shirk is adopting gods other than God and worshipping idols or statues. But mushrik is not limited to this. Attributing God's authority to other beings, ascribing His attributes to others, and seeing entities other than God as the source of provision, healing, harm, and benefit are also forms of shirk. Turning to shrines, graves, or persons considered "holy," hoping for their intercession, and believing they hold a special position before God also falls within this scope.

God says in the Quran:

> "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin." (An-Nisa, 48)

This verse clearly states that shirk is an unforgivable sin and that it is the greatest injustice and slander against God.

The fundamental problem of mushrik is that they do not truly know God. Because they do not fully trust in His power, mercy, and help, they turn to other beings. This is essentially the result of a crisis of faith. When a person loses their trust in their Creator and feels their own weakness and helplessness, they seek refuge in various means, people, or objects to fill that void. Yet true power and honor belong to God alone.

Another dimension of shirk is hidden shirk, which is ostentation and showing off. If a person performs acts of worship not for God's pleasure, but to show others, to earn their admiration, or to gain some benefit from them, this too is a form of shirk.

The Common Root of Fanaticism and Mushrik: Ignorance and Insincerity

Fanaticism and mushrik are actually fed from the same root: ignorance and insincerity. Ignorance means lack of knowledge, and in Islam it is seen as one of the greatest enemies. In the Quran, the expression "a people who do not know" is used for muhrik:

> "And if any one of the mushrik seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know." (At-Tawbah, 6)

This verse shows that the fundamental problem of mushrik is ignorance. A person who does not correctly know God's oneness, majesty, and attributes can easily fall into shirk. Similarly, a person who has not learned the true sources of religion and does not properly understand the Quran acts fanatically. Knowledge is the first condition for finding the right path.

However, knowledge alone is not sufficient. Knowledge must sink into the heart and be internalized with sincerity. This truth is expressed in the Quran through a striking metaphor:

> "The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes of books." (Al-Jumu'ah, 5)

This verse emphasizes that simply retaining knowledge in memory is not enough — that knowledge must be acted upon and lived.

Insincerity is the condition of a person who knows yet does not believe, or believes yet does not practice. This is a state of hypocrisy and ostentation. When a person submits to the whims of the ego, they may ignore known truths and act according to their own interests. This is where sincerity comes in. A sincere believer applies the knowledge they have learned to themselves and fulfills God's commandments solely for His pleasure.

The Social Dimension: The Destructive Effects of Fanaticism and Mushrik

Fanaticism and mushrik are not merely individual problems; they also cause deep wounds at the social level. In a fanatical society, dogmatism, rigidity, and intolerance prevail. People become closed to different views, and criticisms made in the name of religion are immediately branded as "irreligion." This prevents the development of a healthy understanding of religion and stagnates society.

Mushrik, on the other hand, leads to the spread of superstitions in society and to superstition being perceived as religion. When powers other than God are believed in, people open the door to all kinds of absurdities: writing amulets, reading fortunes, witchcraft, astrology, sorcery, and the like become normalized in society. While these distance people from God, they also cause social energy to be wasted.

Both fanaticism and mushrik trigger moral degeneration in society. Because religion is not only rituals and beliefs but also a moral system. When one deviates from the essence of religion, this moral system also collapses. People may pray and fast while lying, cheating, and trampling the rights of others — because for them, religion is not an internal transformation but an outward display.

The Path to Salvation: Monotheism, Knowledge, and Sincerity

The path to salvation from fanaticism and mushrik lies in correctly understanding the belief in tawhid (monotheism). Tawhid is belief in God's oneness, uniqueness, and incomparability. This belief is not merely an intellectual acceptance but a state of complete submission of the heart. Tawhid must be reflected in all of a person's behaviors, thoughts, and intentions.

Knowledge is the most important guide on this path — but the knowledge referred to here is not purely theoretical knowledge; it is a knowledge blended with reason that touches real life. Sincerity, meanwhile, is the heart of this journey. In their turning to God, a person must harbor no ostentation and no hypocrisy. They must keep their intention pure and aim solely for God's pleasure. The essence of religion is ikhlas (sincerely turning to God alone), worship, and righteous deeds. It is the substance of religion that matters, not its form. When a person grounds these three foundations in their life, they are protected from both fanaticism and mushrik.

Repentance: The Door to Starting Anew

A human being can err, make mistakes, and fall into sin. But one of the most beautiful aspects of Islam is that the door of repentance is always open. God addresses His servants thus:

> "Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." (Az-Zumar, 53)

Repentance is not merely remorse. Repentance is leaving behind the past, resolving not to return to sin, and rebuilding life on God's path. Even a person who has committed shirk or acted fanatically can attain God's mercy through sincere repentance. What matters is recognizing that wrong and turning toward what is right.

The Unity of Reason, Heart, and Spirit

Religion is the turning of the whole human being — in all their dimensions — toward God. Reason, heart, and spirit must act together. Reason must grasp right knowledge; the heart must embrace this knowledge with love and sincerity; and the spirit must ascend through this knowledge. Fanaticism kills reason, mushrik corrupts the heart, and both enslave the spirit.

True salvation lies in a person reaching the essence of religion by using their reason, binding their heart to God with sincerity, and illuminating their spirit with His light. This is not an easy path, for the ego, tradition, social pressure, and remnants of ignorance constantly try to pull a person in the wrong direction. But a person who takes refuge in God, seeks His help, and is equipped with knowledge and wisdom will surely prevail over these difficulties.

Jihad is first and foremost a struggle with one's own ego, with one's own ignorance and desires. Whoever wages this struggle attains God's paths, finds peace in this world, and achieves salvation in the hereafter.

Conclusion

The path to protection from the traps of fanaticism and mushrik is to build a faith grounded in reason, knowledge, sincerity, and monotheism. May God show us the right path, protect us from going astray, and grant us the understanding of the true essence of religion.

Human Being: A Creature of Emotion, and the Risk of Idolatry

The human being is, at its core, an emotional creature. Love, fear, trust, need, and the desire to take refuge are inseparable parts of a person's inner world. When channeled correctly, these emotions become blessings that draw a person closer to their Creator; when misdirected, they can become traps that lead to deviation. In Islamic belief, how these emotions are directed is one of the most critical factors determining whether a person preserves their faith or falls into idolatry (shirk).

The Nature of Idolatry and the Role of Emotions

Shirk, according to Islamic belief, means associating partners with Allah and attributing His divine qualities to other beings. This is not merely an overt act such as worshipping idols; it can also occur through the misdirection of the heart and emotions. Islam emphasizes that only Allah deserves worship, and that emotions such as love, fear, and trust must be directed solely toward Him.

Human beings are created with reason and conscience. However, during periods of intense emotion, reason and conscience can be bypassed. This is precisely where shirk arises — most often when emotions that should be directed toward Allah are instead directed toward the wrong people or objects. This process obstructs rational thinking and draws a person toward a satanic inclination. The Quran states that a person who seeks truth through reason will clearly perceive the oneness of Allah. Nevertheless, when emotional factors cause a person to set aside their reason, they fall under Satan's influence and are led down irrational paths. The Quran explicitly notes that polytheists act purely under the influence of their emotions and thus fail to use their intellect.

The Purpose of Emotions in Creation and Their Proper Use

Emotions such as love, fear, trust, need, and the desire for refuge are gifts bestowed upon human beings at the moment of their creation. Each of these emotions, when properly directed, becomes a means of drawing closer to Allah and earning His pleasure. However, if misdirected, they can lead a person into deviation and shirk.

Properly directed emotions guide a person onto the right path. To direct toward a created being the love and fear that are owed to Allah is to deify that being — and this constitutes shirk. No one other than Allah truly deserves to be loved, praised, exalted, feared, or called upon for help, because Allah alone is the source and sustainer of all existence. The purpose of emotions in creation is to orient human beings toward Allah. The emotion of love was given so that a person may love their Creator and feel closeness to Him. Fear was given so that a person may avoid Allah's wrath and punishment. Trust was given so that a person may rely solely on Allah and place their confidence in Him. To direct these emotions toward anyone other than Allah is to deviate from their intended purpose.

The Two Faces of Love: The Distinction Between Faith and Idolatry

Love is one of the most profound emotions in human life. By its nature, love is shaped by an attraction to and admiration of the superior and beautiful qualities of

the beloved. Understanding the true meaning of love and its proper direction is an important principle that strengthens a person's faith.

A person of faith knows that the only being worthy of wholehearted love and attachment is Allah. Allah brought the human being into existence from nothing, and has granted the most precious blessings: a body, intellect, consciousness, and faith. These blessings meet every need in a person's life. Moreover, Allah has promised those who believe and obey Him great blessings in this world and in the hereafter — an expression of His infinite mercy and grace. Therefore, the only being truly worthy of love is Allah. Allah is the source of all beauty and of all sublime attributes. For this reason, love must be felt first and foremost for Allah, and in the highest degree.

When a person views another individual or thing as an independent entity apart from Allah and loves them as one would love Allah, it is one of the clearest signs of falling into shirk. A believer experiences the love they feel for another person as a reflection of the love they feel for Allah. The other person is loved because they carry within them the manifestations of Allah — because they were created by Him, are a blessing from Him, and reflect His beautiful attributes. The believer who loves someone sees behind that love the will and wisdom of Allah.

The love of polytheists, however, is different. As the Quran states, they love beings other than Allah as intensely as they should love Allah. This misguided understanding of love drives them toward great suffering both in this world and in the hereafter. Polytheists view those they love as independent beings and direct toward them the kind of love that belongs to Allah alone.

The Limits of Love in Human Relationships

Relationships between men and women embody the forms of love most commonly encountered in human life. Yet these relationships are often formed outside the pleasure of Allah. In relationships built on romance and emotional bonds, individuals may prioritize pleasing one another over the pleasure of Allah, and may not hesitate to transgress Allah's boundaries in order to satisfy each other. In such relationships, the love that should be directed toward Allah is instead directed toward human beings. The Quran describes such relationships as "worshipping one another" or "taking one another as deities."

If this love turns into a passion that causes one to forget Allah and hinders the proper remembrance of Him, it leads the person into shirk. Allah has granted human beings the natural feeling of being able to love one another. However, this love must not be independent of Allah. It is only right and acceptable for people to love one another when that love is grounded in their love of Allah. The love of believers is clear, luminous, and brings relief to the heart — for the believer loves the other person because they carry within them the manifestations of Allah.

In Islam, the love between spouses is also grounded in this principle. Spouses love one another, but this love is expressed within the framework Allah has commanded and with mindfulness of His pleasure. To transgress Allah's rulings in order to gain one's spouse's approval is to associate the spouse with Allah. Islam encourages love

between spouses but emphasizes that this love must not take precedence over love for Allah.

The Difference Between a Believer and a Polytheist in the Face of Loss and Separation

When a believer loses someone or something they love, they do not fall into deep despair, because they know that the true owner of what they loved is Allah. Allah is the source of all beauty and all manifestation. The loss of what is beloved is part of Allah's plan and decree, and so the believer submits with patience. A person of faith places their love for Allah above all else. If something or someone they love dies, they know this is a test and a decree from Allah. They feel pain and grief, but this grief does not distance them from Allah — on the contrary, it draws them closer to Him. After their loss, the believer turns to Allah, asks Him for patience, and submits to His wisdom.

For polytheists, the situation is different. Polytheists forget Allah and place the love they feel for others above everything else. When the people or things they love leave them, they are overcome by great pain and loneliness — because their love is not rooted in Allah; it is independent of Him. When that love disappears, only emptiness and solitude remain. The people they preferred over Allah lead them into suffering both in this world and in the hereafter. The Quran states that the anguish polytheists experience in this world will be visited upon them in a far more intense form of spiritual torment in Hell. Every heartbreak in this world will, for the polytheists, become a far greater spiritual torment in Hell.

The Disengagement of Reason and Satan's Weapon

Satan can lead a person astray through emotional weapons. The moments when a human being is most vulnerable are those of emotional intensity. Excessive love, excessive fear, and excessive anger cloud a person's intellect and reason. In these states, a person becomes unable to distinguish right from wrong. Emotional influences drive a person toward irrational behavior. By forgetting their responsibilities toward Allah and acting on the emotional bonds they have formed, they can fall into a misguided orientation. This is the result of disengaging one's reason and conscience.

The Quran describes how polytheists blindly imitated their forefathers, acting not on reason but on emotional loyalty alone. Those who said "We found our forefathers on a certain path" placed emotional attachment above rational thinking. This is one of the fundamental causes of shirk. A person can only think correctly and act rightly by using their reason. However, emotional factors can impair one's intellect and hinder rational thought. Emotional intensity can cause a person to confuse right with wrong, and to attribute divine qualities to beings other than Allah.

The Importance of Balance and Proper Orientation

Islam calls upon human beings to understand the truth through reason and to live accordingly. Emotions are blessings inherent in human creation, but their

misdirection leads a person into shirk. Shirk is the consequence of emotions being driven not by reason and logic, but by purely emotional factors. When a person directs their emotions as Allah intends, they are led toward faith and the right path.

True love is love for Allah. Allah is the Creator of all things and the true owner of all beauty. People must place their love for Allah above all else and direct their love and devotion first and foremost to Him. Those who lose sight of this understanding fall into shirk and find themselves facing emptiness, loneliness, and pain in their hearts.

The Quran clearly explains to us what true love is and what harm shirk causes. True love is love for Allah, and this love guides all of a person's relationships in life correctly. In conclusion, to think rightly and act rightly is only possible through the use of one's reason and conscience. Emotions must be balanced with reason and logic. Love for Allah must stand above all else. All other loves must spring from this foundational love and complement it. Only in this way can a person attain peace and happiness in both this world and the next, be protected from shirk, and preserve their faith.

Reliance on Allah: Contemporary Manifestations of the Belief in Tawhid

The fundamental purpose of humanity's creation is to worship Allah alone and to place trust solely in Him. This truth is clearly stated in Surah Al-Dhariyat: "I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Al-Dhariyat, 51:56) Allah is the Creator, Owner, and absolute Sovereign of everything in existence. The continued existence of all beings is possible only through His will. It is Allah alone who grants healing, provides sustenance, and creates joy and sorrow. Forgetting this fundamental truth leads to shirk — the greatest deviation in human history. Shirk means attributing the power, will, and sovereignty that belong to Allah to other beings, or trusting in others alongside Allah. The Quran defines shirk as the gravest sin, one that leads to ruin both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Shirk: The Opposite of Tawhid and the Greatest Sin

The concept of shirk is not limited to its obvious forms, such as idol worship. Attributing independent power to beings other than Allah, seeking help from others besides Him, and ascribing absolute influence to causes are all various manifestations of shirk. This reality is expressed in Surah Ya-Sin:

"And they had taken besides Allah gods that perhaps they would be helped. They are not able to help them, and they are for them soldiers in attendance." (Ya-Sin, 36:74–75)

These verses lay bare how people place their trust in beings that cannot even help themselves, and reveal the depth of this delusion. While those who trust in other than Allah spend their worldly life in humiliation and degradation, they are warned of a more severe and eternal punishment in the Hereafter.

The Condition of Those Who Fall into Shirk: Quranic Examples

In Surah Al-Hajj, the helplessness of those called upon besides Allah is described

with a striking example:

"O people, an example is presented, so listen to it. Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah will never create a fly, even if they gathered together for that purpose. And if the fly should steal away from them a thing, they could not recover it from him. Weak are the pursuer and pursued." (Al-Hajj, 22:73)

This verse exposes the irrationality of shirk in the clearest way. Trusting in beings that are incapable of creating a fly — or even reclaiming what a fly takes from them — demonstrates how far the mind and natural disposition can fall into heedlessness.

Surah Al-Kahf describes the end of those who fall into shirk as follows:

"And he had no company to help him other than Allah, nor could he defend himself." (Al-Kahf, 18:43)

Those deprived of Allah's mercy in this world will watch everything they trusted in disappear one by one; in the Hereafter, they will face endless punishment. In Surah Al-Shu'ara, Allah declares:

"So do not invoke with Allah another deity and be among the punished." (Al-Shu'ara, 26:213)

Tawhid and Tawakkul: The Believer's Life Philosophy

The true believer trusts and relies solely upon Allah at every moment of life. He seeks help only from Him and takes refuge only in Him. This stance is expressed in Surah At-Tawbah:

"Say: Nothing will reach us except what Allah has decreed for us. He is our protector. And upon Allah let the believers rely." (At-Tawbah, 9:51)

The true friend and helper is Allah alone. When a person takes other protectors besides Him, they only reveal their own powerlessness:

"Indeed, to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death. And you have not besides Allah any protector or any helper." (At-Tawbah, 9:116)

This same truth is emphasized in Surah An-Nisa:

"Allah knows your enemies better than you do, and sufficient is Allah as an ally, and sufficient is Allah as a helper." (An-Nisa, 4:45)

Contemporary Manifestations of Shirk

Traditional Forms of Shirk: Shrines and Amulets

Some people, rather than turning to Allah, visit shrines and make requests from those buried there, or have amulets made — thereby falling into shirk. Yet such practices are explicitly forbidden not only in Islam, but in earlier Abrahamic faiths as well. The Torah states:

"Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead." (Deuteronomy, 18:10–11)

To suppose that this ruling applies only to Jews or Christians is a grave error. The commandments of Allah are universal and address all of humanity. The fundamental principles of divine revelation are common to the call of all messengers. Visiting shrines to ask favors from the deceased, and making them intermediaries between the servant and Allah, constitutes open shirk. Allah has placed no intermediary between Himself and His servants. Surah Al-Baqarah states:

"And when My servants ask you about Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." (Al-Baqarah, 2:186)

Modern Shirk: Absolute Trust in Technology and Secondary Causes

One of the most insidious forms of shirk in our age is attributing independent power to technology and secondary causes, apart from Allah. Data analysis, microcontrollers, artificial intelligence, quantum computers, and all technologies developed by human beings produce meaning and results only by Allah's will. These tools, whether used separately or together — even if integrated into a single system — can neither provide benefit nor make any outcome inevitable unless Allah wills it. For the true power lies not in the tools themselves, but in Allah who brings them into being and grants them function.

Attributing Absolute Influence to Secondary Causes

Islam commands that we take hold of secondary causes, yet forbids viewing them as independent from Allah or attributing absolute influence to them. For example:

- Medicine and Medication: Going to a doctor when sick and using medicine is taking hold of secondary causes — a behavior Islam commands. However, saying "This medicine will definitely cure me" is attributing a power to medicine that is independent of Allah. The believer says: "I take the medicine, but the one who grants healing is Allah."

- Artificial Intelligence and Technology: Blindly trusting the decisions of AI systems and treating them as an absolute source of truth is a form of technological shirk. Technology is one of the blessings Allah has bestowed upon humanity, but it too operates by His power. An algorithm can err, a system can fail, a result can be misleading. The believer uses technology, but anchors his trust solely in Allah.

- Science and Scientific Laws: Scientific laws are an effort to discover the order in Allah's creation. However, viewing these laws as absolute rules operating independently of Allah — as if self-sufficient — is a modern form of shirk. The believer knows that gravity, electromagnetic forces, and quantum mechanics are all part of the order Allah created; even in these, many of science's claims are mistaken, and Allah can alter the order whenever He wills.

The Language of the Age: The Deceptiveness of the Religion–Science Divide

Today, some people say, "This is not a religious matter, it is a scientific one," presenting science as if it were a domain independent of Allah's will. Yet in Islam, no such division exists. Everything is Allah's creation, and everything is under His control. Whether the language of the age is religious or scientific, attributing independent influence to any being, cause, person, system, or power other than Allah is shirk according to the Quran. The modern person, while believing they do not worship idols, may in fact be worshipping technology, money, power, and systems.

The True Meaning of Tawakkul

Tawakkul is not laziness or abandoning secondary causes. Tawakkul means taking hold of secondary causes while entrusting the outcome to Allah; it means working diligently while anchoring one's trust solely in Allah. The Muslim does what is within their power, takes the necessary precautions, but knows that the result lies in Allah's hands.

The Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions of Tawakkul

Binding oneself to Allah with complete submission and trust protects the person's mental health and grants them profound peace. For the believer knows that everything is under Allah's control. This conviction:

- Reduces anxiety: They do not worry about things beyond their control.

- Builds patience: They view hardships as tests sent by Allah.

- Cultivates gratitude: They know that blessings come from Allah.

- Provides confidence: They trust that Allah will bring about what is best for them.

Surah Ar-Ra'd states:

"Those who have believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Ar-Ra'd, 13:28)

Practical Ways to Guard Against Shirk

1. Purifying Intention

Doing everything solely for the sake of Allah's pleasure is the first step in protecting oneself from shirk. Seeking praise from people, showing off, and ostentation are forms of hidden shirk.

2. Care in Supplication

In supplication, the principle is to ask only from Allah and not to call upon any other. Even under the guise of "intercession," one must not supplicate to deceased saints, angels, or any created being.

3. A Correct View of Secondary Causes

Taking hold of secondary causes without viewing them as independent from Allah. Seeing Allah's power in every cause.

4. Humility in the Use of Knowledge and Technology

Acknowledging the limits of scientific knowledge and technology, and not absolutizing them. Even the most advanced AI is merely a tool created by Allah and can do nothing without His permission.

5. Constant Dhikr and Contemplation

Keeping Allah constantly in remembrance and reflecting upon His power is the most effective protection against shirk.

The Social and Communal Effects of the Doctrine of Tawhid

The belief in Tawhid offers not merely an individual creed but also a societal vision:

1. Justice and Equality

Refusing to grant absolute authority to anyone other than Allah ensures equality among people. No one is superior to another by virtue of lineage, race, or wealth.

2. Freedom

Being a servant only to Allah liberates people from being enslaved to other human beings, systems, and ideologies. True freedom lies in servitude to Allah.

3. A Sense of Responsibility

Knowing that everything is seen and recorded by Allah instills in the person a powerful sense of moral accountability.

4. Hope and Optimism

Even in the most difficult of times, knowing that Allah's help is near gives the believer strength in hope and resilience.

The Timeless Message of Tawhid

Reliance upon Allah has been the essence of every messenger's call since the beginning of human history. No matter how far technology and science advance in our day, the truth that the source of all power is Allah alone does not change. The Muslim builds the world, advances science, and uses technology — but never regards these as forces independent of Allah. For they know:

"Say: O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is good. Indeed, You are over all things competent." (Al Imran, 3:26)

Those believers who trust and rely solely upon Allah, worship Him alone, and seek help only from Him will live a life of blessing, dignity, and honor in both this world and

the Hereafter. Complete submission to Allah is the true peace and salvation of the human being. Avoiding shirk and turning solely to Allah — taking refuge in His mercy and protection — is the key to felicity in this world and the next. This is the path shown by all the messengers, and it remains valid for all times.

The Deep Meaning of Gratitude: The Guardian of Faith and the Preventer of Shirk

Human life is a journey woven with countless blessings at every moment. Eyes that open with the first light of morning, every morsel that nourishes the body, every affection that warms the heart, every piece of knowledge that enriches the mind... All of these are divine gifts reaching the human being, whether they are aware of it or not. However, since these blessings generally reach people through certain intermediaries, causes, and means, human nature often falls into error: it seeks the source of the blessing in the intermediary and directs its gratitude in the wrong direction. It is precisely at this point that the Quran calls humanity to a profound transformation of consciousness, reminding us that gratitude must be directed solely to the true Owner of blessings — Allah, the Creator and Provider of all existence.

The Reality of Gratitude and Its Relationship with Faith

In the Quran, giving thanks is far beyond an ordinary expression of appreciation; it reflects a profound consciousness of faith. Gratitude means becoming aware that the true source of all blessings is Allah, internalizing this truth in one's heart, and expressing it with one's tongue. This awareness is one of the most fundamental attitudes that reveals the faith of a believer who worships Allah alone. Verse 172 of Surah Al-Baqarah summarizes this reality concisely:

"O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is indeed Him that you worship."

This verse shows that gratitude is not merely a courtesy, but rather a direct manifestation of the belief in Tawhid and sincerity. The expression "if it is indeed Him that you worship" in the verse indicates that gratitude is an inseparable part of pure servitude. A person who is grateful only to Allah has understood that every blessing, every beauty, and every ease in their life occurs under the will and control of Allah. This deep understanding distances a person from shirk and grounds their faith on the pure foundation of Tawhid.

The Fundamental Error of Mushriks: Being Grateful to Causes

One of the most widespread forms of deviation throughout human history is losing sight of the true source of blessings, venerating the causes, and directing one's gratitude toward them. This error appears in the Quran as a defining characteristic of mushriks. Mushriks are grateful to the trade that brings them wealth, to the physicians who protect their health, to the powers that ensure their security — yet they forget Allah, who created and made all of these operative, or they associate partners with Him.

Verse 17 of Surah Al-Ankabut exposes this mistaken understanding with sharp

criticism:

"You only worship, besides Allah, idols, and you produce a falsehood. Indeed, those you worship besides Allah do not possess for you any provision. So seek from Allah provision and worship Him and be grateful to Him. To Him you will be returned."

This verse emphasizes that idols, false deities, and venerated beings possess no real power whatsoever. They have not the slightest influence in providing sustenance, causing harm, or bringing benefit. True power and might belong to Allah alone. Therefore, what an intelligent person must do is correctly identify the source of the blessing and direct their gratitude solely toward that source.

Living Models of Gratitude: The Messengers Sulayman and Ibrahim

While explaining what gratitude should look like, the Quran does not suffice with abstract concepts but presents concrete examples and living models. Among these models, Allah's chosen messengers — Messenger Sulayman and Messenger Ibrahim — stand out prominently.

In Surah An-Naml, an extraordinary event involving Messenger Sulayman is narrated. The throne of the Queen of Sheba is brought before Messenger Sulayman in the blink of an eye. What is Messenger Sulayman's first reaction to this miracle? Does he admire the person who accomplished this feat? No. Messenger Sulayman immediately turns to the true source of the blessing:

"When he saw it placed before him, he said, 'This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful — his gratitude is only for the benefit of himself. And whoever is ungrateful — then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous.'" (Surah An-Naml, 40)

This attitude of Messenger Sulayman is the finest expression of a mature faith consciousness. He does not fixate on the intermediary who performed the miracle; he immediately turns his gaze to Allah. Moreover, he sees this blessing as a trial and is aware that he must make a conscious choice between gratitude and ingratitude. This example shows that a believer must connect every event in their life to Allah.

Messenger Ibrahim, on the other hand, represents another dimension of gratitude in the Quran. In Surah An-Nahl, it is said of him:

"Indeed, Ibrahim was a [comprehensive] leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah. He was grateful for His favors. Allah chose him and guided him to a straight path." (Surah An-Nahl, 120–121)

These verses reveal the inseparable bond between gratitude and Tawhid. Messenger Ibrahim's gratitude to Allah is directly linked to his being a hanif who associated no partners with Allah whatsoever. Gratitude deepens a person's submission to Allah and eliminates the possibility of falling into shirk.

Shaytan's Goal: Ingratitude

The Quran clearly declares that one of the most important targets Shaytan has set for humanity is to prevent people from giving thanks. In Surah Al-A'raf, Shaytan's address to Allah is conveyed as follows:

"He said, 'Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful.'" (Surah Al-A'raf, 16–17)

Shaytan knows that the most effective way to lead people astray is to drive them into ingratitude. Because ingratitude distances a person from Allah, causes them to forget the source of blessings, and ultimately leads to shirk. Shaytan tries to prevent people from being grateful to Allah by surrounding them from the front, from behind, from the right, and from the left — that is, from every direction. These whispers sometimes come in the form of the allure of worldly pleasures, sometimes the weight of hardships, sometimes arrogance and pride, and sometimes indifference.

However, a believer who uses their mind and faith does not fall into these traps of Shaytan. They are conscious that every blessing in their life — and even every difficulty — is a favor and a trial from Allah. This consciousness serves as a solid shield protecting them against Shaytan's whispers.

The Trap of Emotionalism and Faith Consciousness

Another important factor that prevents a person from being grateful is uncontrolled emotionalism. Powerful emotions such as compassion, affection, anger, fear, and sorrow can disable a person's reason and faith consciousness. In particular, extreme grief in the face of the loss of a loved one can lead a person all the way to rebellion against Allah, objection to divine decree, and even to committing shirk.

Yet a believer of mature faith knows that death is also under Allah's absolute decree, that every soul was created with a fixed term, and that for innocent people in particular, death may be a door of salvation from the hardships of this world. This perspective does not eliminate pain, but gives it meaning and does not shake the person's trust in Allah. Acting with faith consciousness rather than succumbing to emotional reactions protects the believer from Shaytan's emotional manipulations. A person who is grateful to Allah sees the wisdom of their Lord in both blessings and hardships, and maintains their submission to Him.

The Transformative Effect of Gratitude on Human Life

Giving thanks, for the believer, is beyond being merely a religious obligation — it is a state of consciousness that gives meaning to life and transforms it. Seeking the source of blessings in Allah provides the person with the following fundamental gains:

Strengthens faith: The grateful person sees the power, mercy, and wisdom of Allah behind every blessing. This constant remembrance keeps faith alive and dynamic.

Increases sincerity: A person who is grateful only to Allah is not indebted to any

created being and does not sanctify any entity. In this state, they perform their servitude solely for Allah.

Protects from shirk: A person who correctly identifies the true source of blessings does not attribute divine qualities to any being, and thus remains distant from shirk.

Provides inner peace: A person who is grateful to Allah knows that their Lord is always with them in every situation. This awareness creates a deep sense of peace and security.

Gives meaning to life: A grateful person views their life not merely through material gains and pleasures, but as a journey of drawing closer to Allah. This makes both worldly and eternal life meaningful.

Gratitude Is the Pulse of Tawhid

The human model praised in the Quran is the person who turns to Allah in every situation, gives thanks to Him, and meticulously avoids shirk. Gratitude is one of the clearest indicators revealing the faith consciousness of the believer. Because true gratitude is not merely a word of thanks spoken by the tongue, but a comprehension of truth that takes place in the depths of the heart.

Correctly identifying the source of blessings, turning not to intermediaries but to the Origin itself, seeing Allah's mercy in every good and every beauty... This is true gratitude. This consciousness of gratitude protects a person from the traps of Shaytan, prevents them from falling into shirk, and enables them to advance steadily on the path of Tawhid.

A believer who is grateful to Allah is a servant who worships only Him, submits only to Him, and seeks help only from Him. The person who grasps and lives this deep understanding of gratitude strengthens their bond with their Lord with each passing day, matures their faith, and attains true salvation both in this world and in the hereafter. Because gratitude is not merely a sign of faith — it is faith itself.

Heva: The Hidden Idol Worship of the Modern Age and the Inner Fall of Humanity

Throughout human history, idolatry was understood as the worship of concrete statues, symbols carved from stone and wood. Yet the Quran speaks of a far more insidious, far more intimate, and perhaps far more dangerous idol that a person can make for themselves: heva (هوى). This concept refers not merely to the desires and whims of the nafs, but to a state of deviance in which a person elevates their own desires above the will of Allah. In the modern world — beneath neon-lit storefronts, across the endless scroll of social media, and behind the rhetoric of "self-actualization" — a form of heva idol worship is taking place perhaps more widespread than at any point in history.

The Theological and Psychological Dimensions of Heva

The word heva carries in its Arabic root the meanings of "to fall" and "to descend." This etymological origin is no coincidence; the person who surrenders to the desires

of the nafs is, in a very real sense, falling and descending. In the language of the Quran, heva is not merely a desire or a wish — it is the state in which those desires overtake the boundaries set by Allah, in which a person's life compass is determined not by sacred scripture but by their own instincts. In Surah Yusuf, verse 53, in the words attributed to the Prophet Yusuf: "I do not absolve myself, for indeed the nafs is inclined toward evil — except when my Lord shows mercy." This statement reveals how slippery the terrain of a person's inner dynamics truly is. What is being emphasized here is the fact that the nafs, by its very nature, inclines toward evil. Without Allah's mercy and guidance, the human nafs continuously steers a person toward ruin, deviance, and choices that serve only its own interests.

From the perspective of modern psychology, the concept of heva corresponds to Freud's "id" — that primitive impulse structure operating on the pleasure principle, seeking instant gratification. However, the Quranic perspective goes deeper; it addresses not merely the existence of these drives, but the consequences of their deification. It is natural to seek the satisfaction of the nafs's desires, but when those desires are made the ultimate aim of life, the highest value — that is precisely the point at which heva idol worship begins.

Shirk-i Khafi: The Deification of Heva as Hidden Shirk

In Islamic theology, shirk — associating partners with Allah — is the gravest of sins. Traditionally, shirk has been understood as worshipping idols or attributing the attributes of Allah to other beings. Yet the Quran speaks of a far more subtle form of shirk: shirk-i khafi, hidden shirk. Making one's heva into a deity is the most common form of this hidden shirk.

In Surah Al-Furqan, verse 43, we encounter the question: "Have you seen the one who has taken his heva as his god?" This rhetorical question is in fact a warning. Allah instructs His messenger — and by extension all believers — to observe those around them who have made their heva into a deity. These people may not openly deny Allah; they may even consider themselves believers. Yet the practical choices, priorities, and values in their lives are determined by the desires of their nafs.

In modern secular societies, this condition is rationalized through discourses such as "being authentic," "staying true to yourself," and "following your passions." These discourses may appear liberating on the surface, yet they in fact construct an ideology that condemns the individual to the tyranny of the nafs. Because there is no such thing as limitless freedom; either you abide by the boundaries Allah has set, or you are shackled in chains forged by your own nafs. The latter, though it appears to be freedom, is in reality the heaviest form of bondage.

Manifestations of Heva in the Modern World

In today's world, heva manifests in a wide variety of forms. Some of these have become so normalized that people struggle to recognize them as worship of their heva at all.

The Consumer Society and the Endless Search for Gratification

Capitalist consumer culture is, at its core, built upon the systematic stimulation of heva and the promise of its satisfaction. Advertisements continuously deliver messages such as "you deserve this," "reward yourself," and "break your limits." These messages validate — indeed encourage — the nafs's boundless desires and demands. One phone is not enough; it must be the latest model. One house is not enough; it must be larger, more luxurious. This endless search for gratification is, in essence, the economic version of heva deification.

What is particularly striking is that research shows that beyond a certain level of prosperity, material consumption does not increase happiness. Yet consumer culture conceals this truth and directs people to desire ever more. This is a precise reflection of the insatiable nature of the nafs. As the Quran indicates, the nafs never says "enough"; left unrestrained, it perpetually demands more.

The Commodification of Sexuality and the Culture of Zina

As stated in Surah An-Nur, verse 3, zina (unlawful sexual relations) is forbidden to believers. Yet modern secular culture views sexual freedom as a mark of liberation and individual autonomy. The discourse that "anything between two consenting adults is permissible" renders moral boundaries entirely subjective and constructs an ideology that glorifies the sexual desires of the nafs.

This approach leads to viewing people as objects, as instruments of sexual gratification. The pornography industry is the most naked manifestation of this heva deification. As individuals are exposed to limitless sexual stimuli through screens, they lose their capacity for genuine closeness, sincerity, and sanctity. This is not merely an individual deviance — it is a societal collapse.

In the Quran, zina is described not only as a physical act but as a corruption of the heart. Zina of the eye, zina of the tongue, zina of the heart — all of these refer to states in which a person's sexual desires spiral out of control and one surrenders to those desires. In the modern world, the "normalization" — indeed the "sanctification" — of this surrender is evidence of how powerful a deity heva has become.

The Age of Status, Fame, and Narcissism

Social media platforms stimulate without limit a person's need to see and display themselves and to seek validation from others. The number of likes on Instagram, followers on Twitter, subscribers on YouTube — these have become the status symbols of the modern age. People meticulously construct virtual identities and leave their real lives in the shadow of these fabrications. This is in fact a manifestation of the nafs's desire for recognition, for distinctiveness, for glorification.

From the Quranic perspective, these desires are natural — but placing them at the center of one's life, shaping every action according to the perceptions of others, constitutes a form of heva idol worship. Because at that point, a person's worth is derived not from their standing before Allah, but from the approval of other people.

The Consequences of Deifying Heva: The Loss of Reason and Conscience

In Surah Al-Furqan, verse 44, Allah asks: "Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except like livestock. Rather, they are even more astray in their way." This is an extraordinarily powerful statement. The mushrik who makes their heva into a deity does not merely distance themselves from Allah; they also distance themselves from their distinctly human capacities — reason and conscience.

The Decline of Rational Capacity

In Surah Al-Jathiyah, verse 23, it is stated that Allah has led astray the one who took their heva as their god "upon knowledge," and has sealed their hearing and their heart. This is a crucial point. The more a person surrenders to their heva, the more they lose the capacity to perceive truth and distinguish right from wrong. Because every piece of information, every argument, is filtered according to whether it aligns with the nafs's desires. In modern terms, this is called "confirmation bias" — the tendency to accept information that confirms one's own preconceptions and reject information that contradicts them. However, the Quran makes clear that this is not merely a cognitive error but a spiritual blindness. The heart of the one who has made their heva into a deity becomes sealed; that heart loses its capacity to receive truth.

The Dulling of Moral Sensitivity

The person who has surrendered to their heva gradually loses their conscience as well. At first, yielding to the nafs's desires may produce discomfort and pangs of conscience. But over time, these behaviors become normalized — even rationalized. Through excuses such as "everyone does it," "it's just once," and "Allah is forgiving," the conscience is silenced. This process leads to a state in which moral sensitivity is so blunted that a person no longer recognizes their wrongdoings as wrong at all. It is at this point that the human being becomes "more astray than livestock." Because animals act on instinct but bear no moral responsibility. The human being, however, possesses reason and conscience, and is therefore accountable. But when one chooses to live by instinct alone, abandoning these capacities, one cannot escape that responsibility — and this condition places such a person in a position worse than that of animals.

The Struggle Against the Nafs: The Jihad-i Akbar

In Islam, the struggle against the nafs is called jihad-i akbar — the greatest jihad. This perspective demonstrates the profound understanding Islam holds of human nature. Overcoming external enemies is comparatively easier. But subduing the internal enemy — the nafs's boundless desires and demands — is a far more arduous struggle. For this enemy is always with us, whispering at every moment, attacking at every opportunity.

Tazkiyah al-Nafs: The Purification of the Nafs

The Quran also shows the method of this struggle. In Surah Ash-Shams: "Successful is the one who purifies it, and ruined is the one who corrupts it." Tazkiyah al-nafs — the process of purifying and cleansing the nafs — is one of the fundamental aims of Islamic spirituality. This process is supported by various practices:

- Salah (prayer) regularly orients the nafs toward Allah, reminding a person five times a day of who they are and who their Lord is.

- Sawm (fasting) teaches control even over one of the nafs's most fundamental needs — eating and drinking — delivering the message: if you can control a need this basic, you can control other desires as well.

- Zakat curbs the nafs's desire to hoard and accumulate wealth, teaching the practice of sharing.

Muraqabah: Living with the Consciousness of Being Under Allah's Watch

In Sufism, the concept of muraqabah means that a person is, at every moment, conscious of being seen by Allah. This consciousness is one of the most powerful mechanisms for restraining the nafs. Because when a person — even when alone, even when no other human sees them — remembers that Allah sees all and knows every intention, yielding to the nafs's desires becomes more difficult. In modern psychology, this resembles the concept of the "inner observer." Yet in the Islamic perspective, this observer is external, real, and possessed of absolute justice. This is not merely a psychological technique but an ontological reality.

The Paradox of Freedom: Where Is True Freedom?

The modern world defines freedom as unlimited options and unlimited gratification. Discourses such as "live however you want," "no one can judge you," and "you decide" celebrate individual sovereignty. Yet this approach overlooks a profound paradox: limitless freedom is, in reality, bondage. The person who has surrendered to the desires of their nafs is not free; they are a slave to their nafs. One who feels compelled to satisfy every desire, who submits to every impulse, may appear free from the outside — but is inwardly bound in chains.

From the Quranic perspective, true freedom derives not from the desires of the nafs but from the will of Allah. The person who submits to Allah, who makes His commands and prohibitions the compass of their life, finds true freedom. Because they have now been liberated from the tyranny of the nafs. There is no longer any compulsion to satisfy every desire; there is only the responsibility of earning the pleasure of one's Lord. And this responsibility, paradoxically, gives rise to the greatest freedom of all.

Today, humanity is perhaps facing the danger of heva idol worship more acutely than at any point in its history. Technology, consumer culture, and the proliferating means of instant gratification offer endless tools for stimulating and satisfying the nafs's desires. Yet hope remains. Every person, at every moment, can make a new choice. They can cease surrendering to their nafs and choose instead to submit to their Lord. This is not an easy path; the jihad-i akbar is the greatest struggle. Yet its reward is peace in this world and salvation in the hereafter.

The Quran is not merely a book of warning — it is also a source of mercy and guidance. It shows the human being the traps of the nafs, but it also teaches the ways out of those traps. One need only read, reflect, and act.

If the person of the modern age — amid glittering storefronts, endless scrolling screens, and promises of instant gratification — can find the courage to return to their own essence, to their own Lord, that is precisely when they will discover their true humanity. Otherwise, as the Quran warns, they stand in danger of becoming "more astray than livestock."

As a final word, let us recall the Quran's clear warning on this matter: The one who makes their heva into a deity is deprived of Allah's guidance. But the one who purifies their nafs and subjects it to Allah's commands attains true salvation. The choice stands before every individual. And this choice determines not only the hereafter, but also the quality of life in this world.

Pure Faith: Building a Heart Purified from Hidden Shirk

Faith is the fundamental pillar of a Muslim's existence. However, for faith to be realized in its true sense, it is not limited to merely believing in Allah's existence. Faith requires dedicating oneself to Him with a sincere submission rising from the depths of the heart, without associating anything with Him.

The True Nature of Faith

Faith, in its Arabic root, carries the meanings of "security" and "trust." This indicates that a Muslim's trust in Allah must be purified from all doubt and hesitation. The Quran emphasizes that faith is not merely a verbal declaration, but a reality that resides in the depths of the heart and reflects upon all behavior. Allah Almighty desires His servants to turn to Him with complete submission. The command in the eighth verse of Surah Al-Inshirah — "And to your Lord turn" — makes this truth clear. This command declares that a person must focus all their orientations, desires, goals, and efforts in life solely upon the pleasure of Allah. The believer must remember their Lord and seek His pleasure from the moment they wake in the morning until they sleep at night, in every breath they take and every step they make.

Pure faith means that a person takes only Allah as their friend and helper in the affairs of this world and the Hereafter. This requires not becoming excessively attached to worldly powers, positions, wealth, or other people — knowing their true value and comprehending that the sole possessor of ultimate power is Allah. Indeed, Allah says in the Quran:

> "He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And He has not taken a son, and has no partner in dominion. And He created each thing and determined it with precise determination." (Surah Al-Furqan, 2)

The Nature and Danger of Hidden Shirk

Shirk is the concept most strongly opposed by Islam. While open shirk manifests in obvious forms such as associating partners with Allah and worshipping idols, hidden shirk constitutes a far more insidious and difficult-to-detect danger. Hidden shirk is when a person, knowingly or unknowingly, places trust in beings other than Allah, equating or even prioritizing the pleasure of others with the pleasure of Allah.

Verse 31 of Surah Ar-Rum contains a clear warning against this danger: "Turning to Him. And fear Him and establish prayer and do not be of those who associate others with Allah." This verse declares that faith reaches its perfection only through turning to Allah, while associating partners corrupts this perfection.

Hidden shirk can manifest in various forms:

Prioritizing the Pleasure of People: If a believer abandons a behavior that Allah has commanded out of fear of people's reaction, or performs a behavior that Allah has forbidden in order to please people, they are engaged in hidden shirk. Social pressure, family relationships, or concerns in the workplace can distance a person from Allah's commands. Yet a Muslim must be able to say, "I fear only Allah, not anyone else."

Deifying the Desires of the Nafs: Allah has informed in the Quran that some people have taken their own desires as their god: "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him?" (Surah Al-Furqan, 43). When a person places the desires of their nafs before the pleasure of Allah, they are in fact worshipping their nafs, elevating it to the position of a deity.

Excessive Attachment to Worldly Wealth: Placing excessive value on wealth, property, position, and fame, and compromising on Allah's commands out of fear of losing them, is another manifestation of hidden shirk. The believer must not forget that these worldly blessings are a trust from Allah and that true value lies in the Hereafter.

Weakness in Tawakkul: Not placing full trust in Allah's power, falling into panic when faced with difficulties, rebelling against fate by saying "How could this happen to me?" — these are signs of weakness in tawakkul and consequently of hidden shirk.

The Dimensions of Turning to Allah

Turning to Allah — desiring Him and asking from Him — is the most fundamental and comprehensive expression of faith. There are several important dimensions to turning to Allah:

1. Complete and Unshakable Trust

The believer fully believes that every event and every development in their life is under Allah's control and will. This belief liberates them from restlessness, anxiety, and fear. Verse 216 of Surah Al-Baqarah presents this truth strikingly: "Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." This verse declares that a person, with their limited knowledge, cannot fully know what is good for them, but Allah, possessor of infinite knowledge, appoints all things in the best manner. Therefore, the believer seeks wisdom in every event that befalls them and is content with Allah's decree.

2. Aiming Solely for Allah's Pleasure

All of a believer's acts of worship, deeds, and intentions must be directed toward the sole purpose of earning Allah's approval. Riya — performing acts of worship for show

before people — is a serious fault that damages faith. When a person does good, they must do it not to earn the praise of others, but solely to earn Allah's pleasure. While praying, fasting, giving charity, or performing any good deed, they must not carry the concern of "What will people think? How will they see me?" Only the question "Will Allah be pleased with me?" matters.

3. Full Compliance with Allah's Commands and Prohibitions

A believer with pure faith organizes their life according to the rules Allah has set. The Quran is their guide to life. They stay away from what Allah has made forbidden, no matter how appealing it appears, no matter what material benefit it may provide. They fulfill what Allah has commanded, no matter how difficult it appears, no matter what sacrifice it requires. This applies both in individual worship and in social life. The believer acts in accordance with the principles of Islam in trade, in relationships with neighbors, in family life, at the workplace — in every sphere. They do not normalize or legitimize any behavior with which Allah is not pleased.

4. Liberation from Worldly Concerns and People's Evaluations

For a believer who truly turns to Allah, what people think, say, or how they evaluate is not determinative. Of course, they treat people with kindness, respect, and goodness — but they do not place people's approval before Allah's approval. This freedom grants the believer great peace. They are freed from being a prisoner of social pressures, fashionable trends, and prevailing opinions. They act with the understanding that "As long as Allah is pleased, it matters not whether the world is pleased or not." This is not recklessness or disregard for others, but the wisdom of ordering one's priorities correctly.

Ways to Protect Against Hidden Shirk

The danger of hidden shirk is ever-present, and even the most sincere believers must be vigilant in this regard. Some practical steps can be taken for this purpose:

1. Continuous Self-Examination

The believer must review the behaviors of the day at certain times, especially before sleeping at night. They must hold themselves to account by asking questions such as: "Which of today's deeds did I do for Allah's pleasure? In which did I seek people's approval? Were there moments when I followed my nafs and went against Allah's commands?"

2. Strengthening Tawakkul

Tawakkul is knowing that after taking hold of the means, the outcome is in Allah's hands, and trusting in Him. The believer does what they can but does not become excessively attached to the result. When starting a task, they say not "I will succeed" but "I will succeed if Allah wills." They do not grieve in failure, nor boast in success. In every state, they praise Allah. To strengthen tawakkul, it is beneficial to contemplate Allah's power, recall His past help, and read and reflect upon the verses of tawakkul in the Quran.

3. Supplication and Seeking Forgiveness

A person is an imperfect being who can never fully escape mistakes and faults. For this reason, they must constantly supplicate, ask Allah for protection from hidden shirk, and seek forgiveness for the faults they have committed.

4. Awareness of Qadar and Contentment

It is necessary never to forget that every event that occurs is part of the fate determined by Allah. Verse 30 of Surah Al-Insan emphasizes this truth: "And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise." Difficulties that befall one must be seen not as misfortune but as a trial and sometimes as a blessing. Allah sometimes tests His servant whom He loves with hardships, thereby cleansing their sins and elevating their rank.

5. Gratitude and Patience

In Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says: "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 155). Being patient in the face of hardships and grateful in the face of blessings are among the most effective ways to remain distant from hidden shirk. Patience requires being content with Allah's decree; gratitude requires never forgetting that the true owner of blessings is Allah.

6. Acting with Ikhlas

What truly matters in the acceptance of deeds is ikhlas — sincerity. A deed performed with ikhlas, even if small, is of great value in the sight of Allah. A deed performed with riya — showing off — even if abundant, holds no value whatsoever.

The Reflection of Pure Faith upon Life

The life of a Muslim with pure faith differs from that of others. This difference manifests in their way of life, manner of thinking, choices, and priorities:

A Peaceful and Tranquil State of Mind: A person who places full trust in Allah and is content with His decree does not live in constant anxiety and worry. They do not carry excessive fears about the future. They are not enslaved to the opinions of others. Within them there is a profound peace.

Resilience Against Difficulties: They do not waver or fall into despair in the face of life's hardships. They know that every difficulty is temporary and Allah's help is near. Even in the most difficult moments, they can say "This too shall pass."

Humility in Success: They do not boast or become self-conceited in the face of their successes. They know that the true owner of success is Allah and praise Him. This humility makes them even more successful.

Justice and Honesty: Since they fear no one besides Allah, they never compromise on justice and truthfulness. They deal justly with everyone — powerful or weak, rich or poor, friend or foe.

Generosity and Sacrifice: Since they know that the true owner of their wealth is Allah, they do not hesitate to spend in His path. They help those in need, support charitable endeavors, and give in charity.

The Journey of Pure Faith

Pure faith is not a station reached in an instant, but a lifelong journey. There may be ups and downs along this journey — sometimes a person may feel very close to Allah, sometimes distant. What matters is to persist on this journey, not to give up, and to rise again every time we fall.

The danger of hidden shirk is ever-present, but a believer who is aware of this danger and strives to protect themselves from it can, with Allah's help, remain distant from it. Allah has promised to help His sincere servants in this regard.

Let us recall the warning in verse 116 of Surah Al-An'am: "And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying." This verse shows that the majority is not always right, and prevailing opinions can sometimes be misleading. The believer follows not the majority, but the Quran. They turn not to what is widespread, but to what is correct.

In conclusion, pure faith is the most precious treasure of a believer. A constant effort is required to attain this faith and to preserve it. Seeing Allah above all things, trusting only in Him, aiming to please Him, and organizing life according to the rules He has set — these are the essentials of pure faith.

Allah has promised to show the straight path to those who turn to Him with pure sincerity. Trusting in this promise, being aware of hidden shirk, and continuously striving to avoid it, we can be among the servants with whom Allah is pleased.

In this journey, our greatest guide is the Quran. Let us beseech Allah to protect us from hidden shirk and to reunite us with Him through pure faith.

"Our Lord, let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, You are the Bestower." (Surah Al-Imran, 8)

From Shirk to Tawheed: Reaching the Purity of Faith

Faith is the fundamental pillar of a Muslim's existence. This faith is shaped by complete submission to Allah, deep devotion, and unconditional trust. However, there is a dangerous disease that corrupts this purity, damages the essence of faith, and distances a person from the true station of servitude: shirk. Shirk means associating partners with Allah, viewing His incomparable power as if it were shared with other beings. This disease sometimes manifests openly and sometimes in hidden forms, enveloping a person's heart, mind, and life. Shirk is the most severely rejected deviation in Islamic belief. Because tawheed — faith in the oneness of Allah — is the very essence of Islam. The words "La ilahe illallah" are not merely a phrase, but a life philosophy. These words declare that there is no power, no might, no will other than Allah. Yet superficially accepting this truth is not sufficient. A person must feel this

reality in the depths of their heart, live it in every moment of their life, and embrace it with their entire being.

What is Shirk and How Does It Emerge?

Shirk literally means "partnership." In a religious context, it means associating partners with Allah's essence, attributes, or actions. This partnership sometimes manifests in open forms such as idol worship, while at other times it seeps into a person's life through subtle ways they may not even be aware of.

Allah's attributes belong to Him alone. He alone is the Lord, the One who gives life, causes death, provides sustenance, and grants strength. However, when a person forgets or takes this reality lightly, they fall into shirk. For example, if a person views the wealth they possess as the product of their own intelligence and effort, if they attribute their successes to their own power, if they think events occur independently of Allah — then they are in a state of hidden shirk.

Hidden shirk is a fungus that grows silently in a person's heart. The individual thinks of themselves as a Muslim, prays, fasts, yet in their heart they have made room for powers other than Allah. Perhaps a sheikh, perhaps their own ego, perhaps worldly possessions. This situation corrupts the purity of faith and destroys the true meaning of servitude.

Shirk in Jahiliyyah Society: A Historical Legacy

Throughout human history, shirk has been at the center of many societies' ways of life. Pre-Islamic Meccan society is the most striking example of this. In that society, idols were accepted as determining factors in every area of life. A separate idol for trade, a separate idol for war, a separate idol for love... People, by turning to these false deities, forgot Allah, their true Creator.

This deviant belief system became established and normalized as a cultural heritage passed down through generations. People grew up with this belief from the day they were born and knew no other way of life. Indeed, the reaction they gave to our Prophet Muhammad's call to tawheed clearly demonstrates this. The Quran conveys the astonishment of the mushrikeen as follows:

"Has he made the gods one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing." (Surah Sad, 5)

For these people, believing in one Allah was a call that stretched the limits of reason and disrupted the order of life. Yet the truth was the exact opposite. Living bound to thousands of false deities distances a person from freedom and keeps them in constant anxiety and fear. What great slavery it is to have to supplicate to a different power for every matter, to seek refuge in a different force for every situation!

Bearing Witness to Allah's Absolute Power: Lessons from Surah An-Naml

Allah has revealed many verses in the Quran that cause people to think, reason, and see the truth. Verses 59–64 of Surah An-Naml reveal the irrationality of shirk and Allah's absolute power in the most beautiful way:

"Say: Praise be to Allah, and peace upon His chosen servants. Is Allah better, or what they associate ? Or He who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you rain from the sky — thereby We caused to grow gardens of joyful beauty whose trees you could not have grown. Is there a deity with Allah? No, but they are a people who ascribe equals. Or He who made the earth a stable ground and placed within it rivers and made for it firmly set mountains and placed between the two seas a barrier. Is there a deity with Allah? No, most of them do not know. Or He who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth. Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember. Or He who guides you through the darkness of the land and sea and who sends the winds as heralds before His mercy. Is there a deity with Allah? Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. Or He who begins creation and then repeats it and who provides for you from the heaven and earth. Is there a deity with Allah? Say: Produce your proof, if you should be truthful." (Surah An-Naml, 59–64)

These verses, through successive questions, set the mind in motion. Who created the heavens and the earth? Who sends down the rain? Who grows the trees? Who rescues the one in distress? Who shows the way in darkness? The answer to every question is clear: Allah. So what logic, what justification, what proof is there to worship anyone besides Him or to associate partners with Him?

The Destruction Shirk Causes Upon a Person

Shirk is not only a sin that leads to punishment in the hereafter. It is also a disease that harms a person in every way in worldly life as well. The negative effects of shirk upon a person are as follows:

1. It Blocks True Faith

Shirk damages the essence of faith, because faith is an indivisible whole. Mixing other powers into submission to Allah corrupts that submission. A person may believe in Allah on one hand, but if they also believe in other powers, this is not genuine faith. True faith is an undivided submission.

2. It Dulls the Mind and Discernment

Shirk dulls a person's ability to think. In the Quran, expressions such as "they do not reason," "they do not think," and "they do not see" are frequently used for the mushrikeen. Because the person within shirk becomes unable to see the truth. Their mind stops working, their logic fails. They ignore the clear signs before them. This enslaves a person to false beliefs, superstitions, and counterfeit values.

3. It Destroys Peace and Inner Tranquility

A person living in shirk can never attain true peace, because they are in constant anxiety. They do not know which power to turn to, they cannot be certain which one will benefit them. One day they seek refuge in a sheikh, the next they wear an amulet, then they look to the stars, visit an astrologer and other fortune tellers... This chaotic state deprives the person of inner peace. Yet complete submission to Allah gives a person deep tranquility and confidence.

4. It Causes Them to Forget Their Purpose in This World

The sole purpose of a person's coming into this world is to worship Allah. This purpose is clearly stated in the Quran: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 56) However, shirk distances a person from this lofty purpose. It causes them to chase worldly goals and forget their true reason for existence. This forgetfulness renders life meaningless and plunges a person into emptiness.

5. It Endangers the Hereafter

Shirk is the only sin that Allah has declared He will never forgive. In Surah An-Nisa, Allah says: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills." (Surah An-Nisa, 48) This verse shows how dangerous shirk is from the perspective of the hereafter. No matter how many good deeds a person has performed in this world, if they die upon shirk, all their deeds are rendered void.

The Hidden Faces of Shirk in the Modern Age

Today, shirk manifests itself in forms very different from — yet far more insidious than — traditional idol worship. Modern people may not worship idols of stone and wood, but they may be worshipping other "idols." Here are some manifestations of shirk in the modern age:

1. The Understanding of Power Independent of Allah

Many people view qualities they possess — talent, beauty, intelligence, strength — as belonging to their own innate selves. They keep saying "I succeeded," "I earned it," "I did it." Yet all these qualities are gifts from Allah. Viewing them independently of Allah is hidden shirk.

2. Making One's Own Ego a Deity

In the Quran, it is said: "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?" (Surah Al-Furqan, 43) This verse criticizes a person placing their own desires, wishes, and passions above the command of Allah. The modern person who acts with the mentality of "I know best," "what is right according to me," and who tries to shape religious and moral values according to their own desires, has in fact made their own ego a deity.

3. Overemphasizing the Means

People attribute the successes, wealth, or happiness in their lives to specific causes. "I became wealthy because I did that job," "I became successful because I met such-and-such person," and so on. It is certainly normal to recognize causes and act accordingly, but forgetting that Allah is the One who truly effects all things is shirk. Foregrounding the means is to cause the true Causer to be forgotten.

4. Rebelling Against Divine Decree

Divine decree (qadar) is everything that Allah has ordained with His absolute knowledge and will. Faith in qadar is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. However, some people, rather than accepting the events that befall them as qadar, constantly rebel, complain, and say "if only it had been otherwise." Rejecting qadar or trying to resist it means not being content with Allah's ordainment, which is itself a form of shirk.

5. Seeking Himmah from Sheikhs

In some Sufi circles, excessive attachment to sheikhs or awliya and the expectation of "himmah" from them is widespread. People use expressions such as "That sheikh prayed for me, it happened thanks to him," or "Such-and-such saint gave himmah." Yet the true path of religion is one that brings a person closer to Allah and fills them with the love of Allah. Placing intermediaries in Allah's position or expecting from them as one would expect from Allah is shirk.

The Path to Freedom from Shirk: Tawheed

Being freed from shirk is both necessary and possible for every Muslim. This liberation is realized through putting several fundamental principles into practice:

1. Sincere and Heartfelt Faith

Faith is a deep acceptance that takes place in the heart. One who says "La ilahe illallah" with their tongue but carries doubt in their heart cannot be considered to have truly believed. Faith is the heart's affirmation, the tongue's declaration, and the limbs' demonstration through action. To be freed from shirk, one must first sincerely accept the oneness of Allah from the heart.

2. Appreciating Allah's Power

Deeply comprehending that Allah is the Creator and Administrator of all things is the foundation of being freed from shirk. From the stars in the heavens to the emotions in our hearts, from the nations upon the earth to the cells in our bodies — everything is under Allah's control. Seeing this grand picture leads a person to tawheed.

3. Understanding and Living the Quran

The Quran is the word of Allah and the most perfect guide for humanity. Reading the Quran, understanding it, reflecting upon it, and living by it is the most effective means of purification from shirk. The Quran rejects every form of shirk and explains tawheed in the most beautiful way. The more a Muslim strengthens their bond with the Quran, the further shirk retreats from them.

4. Constant Tawakkul

Tawakkul is, after making a plan and doing what one can, completely entrusting the outcome to Allah. The person who practices tawakkul attributes their success not to their own power but to Allah's grace. In failure too, they see Allah's wisdom. This understanding protects a person from both the disease of arrogance and conceit, and from despair and helplessness.

5. Change of Intention and Practical Steps

The transition from shirk to tawheed is not merely a mental transformation. It must also be reflected in practical life. If a person says "There is no power but Allah," they must also demonstrate this belief through their actions. They should spend their wealth in the way of Allah, work for Allah's pleasure, and think only of Allah in all their affairs.

Our Prophet Muhammad and our Prophet Ibrahim physically broke the idols. However, what is truly important is breaking the idols in the minds. Today, a Muslim must destroy the false deities in their own heart and mind. They must not allow money, fame, status, or their ego to become "deities."

What Tawheed Brings to a Person

A person who lives upon tawheed gains great benefits both in this world and in the hereafter:

1. Inner Peace and Security

The person of tawheed is at peace because they trust in Allah. They fear nothing, because they know that everything is in His hands. This deep sense of trust protects a person from the stress, anxiety, and depression brought about by the modern age.

2. Freedom

Tawheed frees a person from all enslaving bonds. They are not a servant to people, not a slave to money, not a captive to status. The person who knows they are only a servant to Allah tastes true freedom and knows that nothing else can enslave them.

3. Finding the Meaning of Life

Tawheed shows a person the true meaning of life. They no longer chase empty goals but turn toward the real objective. They strive to live every moment, every breath, for Allah. This grants life a deep meaning and purpose.

4. Earning Allah's Mercy and Help

In verse 55 of Surah An-Nur, Allah promises those who live upon tawheed:

"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, they worship Me, not associating anything with Me." (Surah An-Nur, 55)

This verse gives glad tidings of the worldly and otherworldly reward for living upon tawheed. Allah will empower such servants, bring them to peace, and grant them the finest recompense.

5. Salvation in the Hereafter

Most importantly, a person who dies upon tawheed attains Allah's mercy. A faith free of shirk is the key to paradise. In Surah An-Nisa, Allah says:

"Except for those who repent, correct themselves, hold fast to Allah, and are sincere in their religion for Allah — for those will be with the believers. And Allah is going to give the believers a great reward." (Surah An-Nisa, 146)

The Trap of Shaytan: The Misconception That "Tawheed is Difficult"

Shaytan makes tawheed appear difficult to people, and shirk easy. He whispers: "You already believe in one Allah, what harm is there in trusting others a little too?" — "No need to be so strict" — "Everyone attaches themselves to something, you do the same." Yet this is a great deception.

Tawheed is actually what brings ease to a person. Consider the hardship of servitude to thousands of false deities: separate rituals for each, separate vows, separate supplications... And you can never be sure of any of them. Yet how simple and how peaceful it is to worship one Allah alone!

In Surah Ibrahim, Shaytan confesses on the Day of Resurrection how he will have misled those who followed him:

"And Shaytan will say when the matter has been concluded: Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves. I cannot be called to your aid, nor can you be called to my aid. Indeed, I deny your association of me before. Indeed, for the wrongdoers is a painful punishment." (Surah Ibrahim, 22)

This verse shows that Shaytan leads people astray not by force, but by deception. And people follow Shaytan of their own free will. Therefore, what must be done to be freed from shirk is to see through Shaytan's game and show resistance against it.

Tawheed: Separate Masters, or One Allah?

In Surah Yusuf, while the Prophet Yusuf is in prison, he poses the following striking question to the two men beside him:

"O two companions of prison, are separate lords better or Allah, the One, the Prevailing?" (Surah Yusuf, 39)

This question expresses the very essence of tawheed perfectly. A person will either be divided and scattered among many false powers, or turn toward the one true power. Serving many masters leaves a person helpless. But serving one master — and that master being Allah, the possessor of absolute power — strengthens, comforts, and brings peace to a person.

The Beauty of Pure Faith

Shirk is a great disease that corrupts the purity of faith, distances a person from Allah, and causes loss both in this world and in the hereafter. However, it is possible

to be freed from this disease. A sincere intention, deep reflection, holding firmly to the Quran, and constantly turning to Allah are the means of purification from shirk.

A person who lives upon tawheed finds true peace, freedom, and meaning. Every moment of their life becomes an act of worship. Because in every breath, every step, every thought, they remember Allah and trust in Him.

Religion finds its true meaning only when it is pure. A faith mixed with shirk is incomplete and distorted. Allah desires from His servants a faith that is immaculate and pure. And this faith opens the doors of endless happiness for a person both in this world and in the hereafter.

Today, even though shirk confronts us in different guises in the age we live in, the formula for being freed from it remains the same: "La ilahe illallah" — There is no deity but Allah. It is not enough to say this word only with the tongue; it must be affirmed by the heart, comprehended by the mind, and lived in action.

A person who worships only Allah, trusts only in Him, fears only Him, and hopes only in Him — is a true believer. And such a person will never suffer loss, neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

May Allah purify us all from shirk, cause us to live upon tawheed and to die upon tawheed, and make us among those who possess pure, unadulterated faith.

Can Certainty Be Claimed, or Is Only "Reading the Signs" Possible?

1. Gold and Currency Prices in Economics: Expert or Psychologist?

Every day, hundreds of "economists" on television, YouTube channels, and social media present predictions about gold and currency prices. Yet one question must be asked: if these predictions were truly accurate, why are these people getting rich from television appearances and advertising rather than from their investments? There is no such thing as genuine expertise in predicting gold and currency prices in economics. If an economist truly knew by what percentage gold prices would rise tomorrow, they would not share that with the media — they would put it into their investment portfolio. They would buy on the day prices rise and sell on the day they fall, and they would rank among the wealthiest people in the history of the world. But what actually happens is the exact opposite: millions of people believe the same prediction and move in the same direction. If everyone buys at the same time, prices rise. If everyone sells at the same time, prices fall. The prediction steers the people who make up the market, and the market in turn dismantles that prediction. Among the factors that determine direction in markets are inflation, money supply, and geopolitical tensions. When the prospect of war emerges, gold rises. When purchasing demand picks up, currencies move. Even if prices temporarily dip before inflation subsides, a renewed rise is inevitable shortly after. At this point a question arises: so why are predictions made at all? The answer is simple. What is being communicated in economics is not knowledge — it is behavioral psychology and mass manipulation. Nobody can know with certainty what will happen.

2. University Admissions Counseling: What If Everyone Picks the Same Place?

Every year, those who take on the role of admissions counselor during the university preference period create selection lists for hundreds of thousands of students. Yet the fundamental paradox in this field is the following: if an admissions counselor were truly knowledgeable and honest, would they have their own child's or sibling's preference list written by another counselor? The answer is obvious: they would not. Because there is a well-known dynamic in admissions counseling. When everyone chooses the same place, that place becomes popular — and this produces a deeply ironic outcome. The most striking example of this dynamic is as follows: departments that closed with the lowest rankings the previous year experience a dramatic surge in the new admissions cycle. The reason is a remarkably clever pattern of human behavior. Students seeking a second university placement, or those wishing to enroll in open education programs without an exam, flock to these departments. Nobody notices, and while everyone assumes these departments will again close with low rankings, they unexpectedly soar — becoming the intense focus of students who had previously enrolled with low scores. There is no such thing as genuine expertise in university admissions counseling.

3. Earthquake Dates

Geophysical engineers and geologists conduct continuous research on fault lines. The result of this work produces an extraordinarily comprehensive picture composed of historical period analyses, soil type assessments, and seismic data readings. Yet one truth remains unchanged: the date of an earthquake cannot be known with certainty. If it could, what would happen? They would warn everyone before the earthquake, evacuate the region, and all would continue their lives without ever experiencing such a tragedy. But since this does not happen, every earthquake is experienced as a shock. That said, many signs can be observed before an earthquake. There is a well-known concept in geology: when active movement begins along fault lines, small tremors occur first — known as foreshocks, or the preparatory phase. These tremors carry the character of a forewarning for the main earthquake. However, how long these tremors will last, when the main earthquake will arrive, and what its magnitude will be cannot be determined with certainty by any technology. The only thing that can be done in the field of earthquakes is to take precautions. Ground surveys, structural inspections, evacuation plans, and public awareness campaigns are among the most powerful tools available to humanity. These do not provide certainty, but they do reduce harm.

4. The Climate Crisis and Famine: When Is Tomorrow?

Climate scientists publish hundreds of studies proving that the world is warming, glaciers are melting, and the climate balance is deteriorating. These findings are certain. However, it is not possible to give a definitive answer to the question "when will famine begin?" When rainfall amounts decrease, when global warming accelerates, when serious disruptions emerge in the food production chain — that is when famine comes knocking. When exactly the threshold will be crossed cannot be predicted with certainty by anyone. There is a particularly noteworthy cycle here. Individuals or groups who deny global warming oppose the proposed environmental protection measures. But this opposition leads to the continuation of harmful gas

emissions and actively contributes to the deepening of the climate crisis. In other words, those who deny global warming are themselves among the chief architects of the crisis. It is a tragic cycle: the denier generates the crisis, and as the crisis deepens, the insistence on denial grows stronger.

5. Weather Forecasts: The Most Accurate Predictions, Yet Still Not Certain

Among the four fields, the most "reliable" one is meteorology. Today, weather forecasts are supported by highly advanced computer models and satellite data. Yet they have their limits. Three-day forecasts are accurate more than ninety percent of the time. Seven-day forecasts hover around eighty percent. Beyond ten days, they cease to be forecasts and become statistical analogies — predictions of very low reliability. Here too, the same human dynamic comes into play. If a meteorologist knew with certainty that hail would fall on a specific region — down to the hour and minute — rather than announcing it on television under the headline "Disaster is coming!", they would be making enormous profits from vehicle insurance companies or agricultural exchanges in that area. But meteorologists too only sell probabilities. They present these probabilities on television screens in a dramatic tone, because ratings, clicks, and viewer attention are earned through that dramatic presentation.

6. The Butterfly's Wing: Chaos Theory and the Intersection of Human Fate

There is a profound parallel between the concept of "human psychology" in economics and "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" in the atmosphere. This parallel is expressed through chaos theory. A butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon could, theoretically, trigger a storm in Europe. No matter how powerful the computers used, the movement of every air molecule in the atmosphere cannot be measured, and no definitive conclusion can be drawn from it. The same is true of economics. The market is the sum total of the fear and greed of millions of people. This sum cannot be calculated in advance, because each person makes individual decisions, and these decisions influence one another — they leap, they collide. The outcome is unpredictable.

7. The Unseen and the Signs: A Quranic Perspective

The common thread running through all four fields is expressed most cleanly and precisely by the Quran. In verse 59 of Surah Al-An'am, Allah says: "The keys of the unseen belong to Him alone. None knows them but He." This verse is the definitive declaration that every form of prediction or foresight available to humanity is fundamentally limited. The critical distinction to be observed here is this: the unseen cannot be known, but there are signs that lead toward the unseen. These signs are not read for the purpose of certainty — they are read for the purpose of precaution. In economics, inflation, money supply, and shifts in geopolitical balances are signs. They must be read, but they are not sufficient to know the outcome with certainty. In university admissions counseling, while seven to ten years of data would be ideal, a minimum of three to four years of tabulated data constitutes the signs. This data must be interpreted, but it is not possible to state with certainty what will happen in the future. In the case of earthquakes, foreshocks and fault movements are signs. These signs are read, precautions are taken, but the date remains unknown. In

climate, declining rainfall, rising temperatures, and gas emissions are signs. Preparations are made based on these signs, but nobody knows exactly when famine will arrive. It might be said that no one is truly qualified even in data analysis — but that claim is not actually accurate. Data analysis itself is, in reality, built upon a layer of assumptions and constructs.

8. What Can a Human Being Do? Four Paths

The Quranic framework draws a remarkably clear outline here. A human being can do three things: read, take precautions, and place their trust in God (*tawakkul*).

Reading means analyzing the available signs, examining the data, and drawing the soundest possible conclusions from the information at hand. At this stage, a human being can be an intelligent entity.

Taking precautions means putting practical steps into action based on the conclusions drawn from reading. Balancing a portfolio in economics, creating alternatives in admissions decisions, preparing for earthquakes, building a sustainable lifestyle for the climate — all of these fall within the scope of precaution.

Tawakkul means entrusting the outcome to God. After a person has taken every possible precaution, they accept that the outcome is not within their own control and rely solely upon God.

There Are No Experts, But There Are Intelligent People

In conclusion, the following can be said: no human being is an expert regarding gold and currency prices in economics, outcomes in university admissions counseling, earthquake dates, or the starting points of climate-related famine. Because in all of these fields, the outcome takes shape within a web of countless variables that no person can know in advance. Yet a human being is an intelligent entity. They can read the signs. They can take precautions. And they can entrust the outcome to God. The real danger lies in claiming certainty. Every voice that says "I know — act according to me" is a misleading voice. When a person says "I have read the signs, I have taken my precautions, the rest is in God's hands," they become both an intelligent and a trusting individual. The unseen cannot be known. But the signs can be read. This distinction draws both the path and the boundary of every form of analysis. And being aware of this boundary is what it truly means to be knowledgeable.

The Religious and Moral Dimension of Lyrics: An Evaluation from an Islamic Perspective

Music has been a universal art form throughout human history — a medium through which emotions are expressed, social messages are conveyed, and cultural values are passed down from generation to generation. Far beyond mere entertainment, music and song lyrics in particular have the power to directly or indirectly influence the listener's intellectual world, value judgments, and even belief system. In this context, questioning the effects of the messages carried by song lyrics — whether consciously or unconsciously — on individuals' faith, values, and moral principles is especially important for devout individuals.

For those who hold the Islamic faith, this subject takes on an even more sensitive dimension. Islam offers a holistic way of life that encompasses not only acts of worship but every aspect of daily living. At the center of this way of life stands the belief in tawhid — faith in the oneness and incomparability of Allah. Accordingly, the cultural content a Muslim consumes, the music they listen to, and the messages they are exposed to must be evaluated in terms of whether they support or undermine this foundational belief.

The Qur'an's Warning: Staying Away from Environments Containing Disbelief

The Qur'an, Islam's holy scripture, calls upon believers to keep away from environments in which Allah and His verses are treated with disrespect. This matter is clearly emphasized in verse 140 of Surah An-Nisa:

"He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allah's revelations being rejected and ridiculed, you must not sit with them unless they engage in a different topic. Otherwise, you would be like them. Surely Allah will gather the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell."

This verse serves as a broad warning that applies not only to physical environments but also — in the modern context — to digital media, music, and other cultural content. The logic of the verse is this: being present in environments where Allah's verses are denied or mocked can gradually cause an individual to become desensitized to that disbelief, and may even lead the person to become part of that disbelief themselves. This is a natural outcome of human psychology; messages one is constantly exposed to eventually become normalized and internalized.

Content Analysis of Modern Popular Music

When today's popular music industry is examined, it becomes apparent that the core themes of many songs revolve around rebellion against Allah and fate, extreme individualism, materialism, and hedonism. The philosophical underpinning of these lyrics generally reflects a human-centered worldview — a conception of existence independent of Allah.

The Theme of Rebellion Against Fate and Complaint

In many popular songs, expressions such as "Why did you leave me?", "Life hasn't been fair to me," or "Why me?" are frequently encountered. While such words give voice to human suffering on one hand, on the other they contain an indirect critique of and complaint about Allah's decree and wisdom. According to Islamic belief, fate (qadar) is the divine determination set within the framework of Allah's infinite knowledge and wisdom, and the believer is obliged to accept this decree with contentment (ridha). Expressions that rebel against fate can, over time, cultivate in the listener a tendency to question Allah's justice and mercy. This may become especially pronounced in individuals going through difficult times and who are emotionally vulnerable. A person continuously exposed to such messages may, rather than viewing their hardships as a test from Allah, fall into the mindset that life has been "unfair" to them.

Absolute Human Love and Lack of Submission

Another problematic theme that appears in many love songs is the absolutization of human love and the attachment of all existence to that love. Expressions such as "I can't live without you," "You are my everything," or "I worship you" attribute to another human being qualities and positions that belong solely to Allah. In Islamic terminology, this means that instead of attaching one's heart exclusively to Allah, one attaches it to another being — an act that can verge on the concept of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). Human love is certainly not forbidden in Islam; however, the boundaries are drawn such that this love must not reach a position where it overshadows or damages one's love for and devotion to Allah. Yet in modern songs, what is frequently encountered is love being elevated to an almost divine status, with the person's entire reason for existence being tied to that love.

Self-Centeredness and Materialism

Particularly in rap, hip-hop, and pop music, songs that glorify an excessively self-centered lifestyle are widespread. Lyrics such as "I'm the best," "I can buy anything with my money," or "I answer to no one" stand in direct opposition to the values of humility, generosity, and social responsibility that Islam teaches. Such messages can, especially in young listeners, reinforce a conception of existence independent of Allah and the notion that worldly success and material wealth are the purpose of life. In Islam, however, the purpose of humanity's creation is stated clearly: "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me." (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 56)

The Psychological and Spiritual Effect of Music

The powerful effect of music on human psychology has been confirmed by scientific research. Music can directly influence the brain's emotional centers, shaping a person's mood, motivation, and even their way of thinking. Song lyrics take this effect a step further by transmitting particular worldviews and value systems. Lyrics that are repeatedly heard and emotionally charged can penetrate the listener's subconscious and gradually influence their thought patterns. This process often takes place without awareness; while a person listens to a particular song because they enjoy it, they are in fact also internalizing the messages that song carries.

From an Islamic perspective, the purity of the heart and its sensitivity toward Allah is the most precious treasure to be safeguarded. The continuous listening to songs that contain disrespect toward Allah's names and attributes, that encourage disbelief and polytheism, or that normalize immorality can cause the heart to gradually become desensitized to such content. Words that are initially disturbing begin, upon repeated exposure, to be regarded as normal, and can ultimately become part of the person's own value system.

The Place and Limits of Music in Islam

Music is not categorically forbidden in an absolute sense; however, its content and the elements that accompany it are decisive. In evaluating music within the modern context, the following criteria should be taken into account:

The content of the lyrics: Do the song's lyrics promote forbidden things such as disbelief, polytheism, immorality, alcohol, or drug use? Do they contain disrespect toward Allah and His messengers? Do they include rebellion against and complaint about fate?

The effect of the music: Does the music being listened to cause one to neglect obligatory acts of worship? Does it transform a heart engaged in remembrance of Allah (dhikr) and turned toward worship into a heart in heedlessness (*ghaflah*)?

Accompanying elements: Is the music consumed alongside environments that encourage alcohol, gambling, or fornication?

The Danger of Participating in Environments of Hypocrisy and Disbelief

Verse 140 of Surah An-Nisa warns not only those who actively commit acts of disbelief and polytheism, but also those who are passively present in such environments. According to the verse's logic, being present in a gathering where Allah's verses are denied or mocked can make a person complicit in that disbelief. When this principle is applied to the present day, listening to songs containing disbelief may represent exposure to these messages and, indirectly, a form of participation in them. In particular, listening to a song with approval, willingly and repeatedly, may carry the meaning of consenting to the message of that song.

The phrase in the continuation of the verse — "you would be like them" — is of utmost importance. This indicates that being present in environments containing disbelief can, over time, cause a person to come to resemble that disbelief. A person gradually begins to take on the qualities of the thoughts and values they are constantly exposed to — a reality that is also supported by social psychology.

Conscious Listening and Awareness of Responsibility

A Muslim individual's attitude toward music must be conscious and responsible. This does not mean avoiding music entirely, but rather being aware of the content being consumed and evaluating its effects on one's spiritual life. Every believer should ask themselves the following questions:

- Does the song I am listening to strengthen or weaken my faith in Allah?

- Do these lyrics negatively affect my attitude toward accepting fate with contentment?

- Does this music cause me to neglect acts of worship such as prayer and reading the Qur'an?

- Are the messages of this song eroding my moral values?

- Does it contain any disrespect toward Allah's names and attributes, His messengers, or religious values?

Giving honest answers to these questions will help the person review their music consumption habits and change them when necessary.

Protecting Children and Young People

Children and young people in particular are more vulnerable to the influence of music and song lyrics. Young individuals whose belief and value systems have not yet fully settled can be affected far more deeply by the songs they listen to. It is important for parents and educators not to impose a blanket ban on young people's music consumption, but rather to raise them as conscious listeners. This can be achieved through the cultivation of musical taste, the strengthening of critical thinking skills, and the internalization of religious values. Equipping children from an early age with the ability to critically evaluate the messages of popular culture will protect them from harmful content.

Repentance and a New Beginning

Islam is extremely merciful and forgiving regarding past mistakes. If a person has, unknowingly or without realizing it, listened to songs containing disbelief and has later recognized the wrongness of this, what they must do is offer sincere repentance (tawbah). Repentance means not only feeling remorse for a past mistake, but also being determined never to return to that mistake and changing one's behavior accordingly. The Qur'an emphasizes in many places that Allah's mercy is boundless and that He forgives those who sincerely repent.

A Balanced and Conscious Approach

Music is an important part of humanity's shared cultural heritage and does not need to be banned entirely. However, within the framework of Islam's foundational principles, the content of music — and especially song lyrics — is of the utmost importance. A Muslim individual must continuously question whether the music they listen to draws them closer to Allah, whether it strengthens their faith, and whether it supports their moral values. They must consciously keep away from songs that encourage polytheism, rebellion against fate, immorality, and forbidden acts.

It must not be forgotten that faith is not merely a matter of the heart's assent; it also manifests in one's words and deeds. The songs we listen to, the books we read, the films we watch — all of these shape our intellectual world and, consequently, affect our faith. For this reason, being selective and conscious about the cultural content we consume is part of the effort to protect and strengthen our faith.

The message of verse 140 of Surah An-Nisa is clear: staying away from environments, words, and messages containing disbelief and polytheism is a responsibility for the believer. This responsibility also applies to music consumption in today's world. Every Muslim must remember that the words that enter the ear will penetrate the heart and, in time, shape their emotions — and must act with this awareness.

In conclusion, a balanced, conscious, and religiously respectful approach to music consumption will allow the modern Muslim individual to enjoy worldly pleasures while also safeguarding their life in the Hereafter. The goal is not to be entirely deprived of music, but to consume music within the boundaries set by Allah —

without rebelling against Him and without causing harm to one's faith.

Marriage in the Light of the Quran: From Mushrik-Based Unions to Faith-Based Relationships

The Quran, the primary source of Islam, aims to guide humanity in both individual and social life. However, throughout history, an understanding shaped by hadith literature and traditional madhab interpretations — rather than the essence of the Quran — has caused deep problems, particularly in male-female relationships and the institution of marriage.

The Foundation of Marriage in the Quran: Love, Compassion, and the Pleasure of Allah

The Quran defines marriage not merely as a social contract or a means of meeting needs, but as a sign (ayah) of Allah. This truth is clearly expressed in Surah Ar-Rum, verse 21:

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

This verse clearly lays out the fundamental elements of marriage. Marriage is a divine arrangement created so that spouses may find peace in one another, with love and compassion between them. The concept of "tranquility" mentioned here shows that marriage is a source of spiritual peace. Spouses complement each other's shortcomings, support one another, and through this union come to understand the wisdom of Allah's creation.

Yet today, both in Islamic societies and in the Western world, marriages are largely established outside these core principles. Self-interest, economic expectations, social pressures, and superficial attraction form the basis of marriages, while love and compassion are pushed to the background. This inevitably leads to conflict, unhappiness, and ultimately divorce.

The Position of Women in Traditional Understanding and the Distortion of Marriage

In Muslim-majority countries, the social position of women has unfortunately been shaped more by hadith literature and madhab interpretations than by the Quran. Throughout history, these interpretations have defined women as deficient in intellect and religion, and as figures who lead men astray. Practices such as prohibiting women from worship during menstruation, counting their testimony as half, excluding them from public life, and depriving them of the right to education are all products of this distorted understanding.

This traditional patriarchal view regards women within marriage as servants, childcare providers, or merely instruments for satisfying sexual needs. Women, lacking economic freedom, have been forced to live lives dependent on men for survival. This has turned the relationship between spouses into nothing more than a transactional arrangement and made it impossible to build a love-based partnership.

In the Quran, however, women and men are defined as equal individuals. Both are servants of Allah and both carry the same responsibilities. Surah An-Nisa, verse 117 states:

"They call upon instead of Him none but females, and they call upon none but a rebellious Satan."

This verse criticizes the tendency during the pre-Islamic period and beyond to idolize women. A woman is neither a being to be worshipped nor a creature to be degraded. Like a man, she is a servant of Allah, and in this regard there is no difference between the two.

Mushrik-Based Marriages: The Crisis of Contemporary Society

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 221 makes clear what the foundation of marriage must be:

"And do not marry mushrik women until they believe. And a believing servant woman is better than a mushrik woman, even though she might please you. And do not marry mushrik men until they believe. And a believing servant man is better than a mushrik, even though he might please you. Those invite to the Fire, and Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that perhaps they may remember."

Understanding the term "mushrik" in this verse as referring only to idol-worshippers is insufficient. Shirk means placing anything other than Allah at the center of one's life. Anyone who places worldly values — wealth, property, status, fame, sexuality — above the pleasure of Allah falls under this definition.

In modern society, most marriages are built on exactly this foundation of shirk. Men expect service, sexual gratification, and childcare from women; women expect economic security, social status, and material comfort from men. Both parties view the relationship as a transaction, and each develops expectations in return for the "services" they provide to the other.

In such marriages, love and compassion cannot flourish. Because the foundation of the relationship is self-interest. A woman submits out of compulsion to a man she can only endure because she lacks economic freedom. A man believes he possesses a woman whom he views as a being that serves him and meets his needs.

Women's Liberation and the Rise in Divorce Rates

In Western societies, women gaining economic independence has brought about a great transformation in the institution of marriage. Women who are no longer compelled to depend on men for their livelihood do not wish to live with men who demean them, show them no love, or fail to respect them. This has caused a dramatic rise in divorce rates.

A similar process is taking place in societies such as Turkey, which are trying to shed their traditional structures. As women take their place in education and professional life and gain economic independence, they have begun to resist marriages based on

self-interest and disrespect. While this development is positive in terms of women's liberation, it is also leading to the weakening of the family institution and social fragmentation.

However, it is wrong to view this situation solely as a consequence of women's liberation. The real problem is that marriages were never built on healthy foundations to begin with. These problems were invisible because women were oppressed and silenced. As women are liberated, problems that already existed are being brought to light.

A Critique of the Traditional Male Mindset

Men raised on traditional Islamic interpretations find it difficult to develop a respectful and loving attitude toward women. Narrations in hadith literature that define women through "deficiency in intellect and religion," interpretations that say women's testimony should count as half, and narratives claiming women have a ruinous influence over men — all of these create a negative perception of women in the minds of men.

A man raised with such an understanding does not see his wife as an equal individual, but as a being who exists to serve him. In an environment devoid of love and compassion, a woman is forced out of necessity to submit to her husband. This situation provides a healthy living environment for neither the woman, nor the man, nor the family that is formed.

In the Quran, however, no such definition of woman exists. Woman and man are created from the same soul. Both are sent to the world as vicegerents (*khalifah*). Both carry the same responsibilities and await the same recompense in the afterlife. Gender is merely a biological difference, and this difference is not a cause of superiority before Allah.

Building a Faith-Based Marriage

The model of marriage proposed by the Quran is founded on faith. As clearly stated in Al-Baqarah verse 221, marrying a person of faith is better than marrying a mushrik who may be more materially attractive. Because a marriage without unity of belief inevitably leads to conflicts of values.

A faith-based marriage rests on the following principles:

Priority of Allah's Pleasure: Marriage is established not for worldly interests, but to earn the pleasure of Allah and to follow His commands together. Both spouses love each other for the sake of Allah and serve one another for the sake of Allah's pleasure.

Equality and Respect: Women and men are recognized as equal individuals. Both complement each other's shortcomings and support one another with their strengths. Neither is the other's servant or master.

Love and Compassion: As stated in Ar-Rum verse 21, love and compassion between

spouses is a sign of Allah. These feelings must be cultivated, protected, and strengthened.

Mutual Responsibility: Both spouses bear responsibility for the healthy functioning of the marriage. The man is not solely responsible for finances, nor is the woman solely responsible for housework. Both share each other's burdens.

Spiritual Companionship: Marriage is not merely a worldly union but also a spiritual journey. Spouses serve as means for each other to draw closer to Allah.

What Must Be Done for Social Transformation

Returning to the Quran's Islam is essential in order to prevent societal disintegration and to build healthy marriages. This transformation requires the following steps:

Purification from Superstitions: All superstitions originating from hadith literature and traditional madhab interpretations that contradict the Quran must be abandoned. The sufficiency of the Quran must be accepted and the Quran taken as the sole source of Islam.

Elevating the Social Position of Women: Women must be granted full freedom in education, work, and participation in social life. Gender equality must be implemented not only in rhetoric but also in practice.

Elimination of Gender Discrimination: All traditional practices that discriminate between women and men in matters such as worship, education, work, and testimony must be abandoned.

Marriage Education: Young people must be educated before marriage in the Quranic understanding of marriage. It must be conveyed that marriage is not a transactional relationship but a spiritual union.

Economic Justice: Women's economic freedom is essential for them to attain an equal position within marriage. However, this freedom must be used not to weaken the family institution, but to place marriage on healthier foundations.

At the root of the problems within the institution of marriage lies the fact that worldly interests, rather than the pleasure of Allah, occupy its center. This has brought about the degradation of women and the reduction of marriages to purely economic relationships. Rising divorce rates in both Islamic societies and the Western world are the clearest indication that marriage is not resting on healthy foundations.

The guidance of the Quran aims for a society in which women and men are equal, love and compassion are paramount, and the pleasure of Allah is placed at the center. Reaching this goal requires breaking free from traditional and superstition-laden understandings, accepting the sufficiency of the Quran, and returning to the essence of Islam.

An understanding of Islam in which Allah is loved, in which spouses love one another for the sake of Allah, and in which individuals see each other as equals without gender discrimination — that is, Islam as found in the Quran — must urgently be

conveyed to society. Only through such a transformation can the family institution be strengthened, society placed on healthy foundations, and humanity find peace both in this world and in the hereafter.

The principles the Quran set forth 1,400 years ago remain valid today. The problem is not in the Quran — it is in our having drifted away from the Quran. And the path to salvation lies in returning to it.

Submission to Allah: The Path from Pain to Peace

Human beings are, by nature, creatures in search of peace. The difficulties, losses, and pains encountered at every stage of life affect us deeply. While some people can cope with these pains — and even make them a means of spiritual maturation — others are plunged into deep distress by the very same events. So what makes the difference? Why does the same hardship feel unbearable to one person, while for another it becomes a test and an opportunity for growth? The answer lies in one's perspective on life, in the way events are interpreted, and most importantly, in how the source of suffering is understood. The Holy Quran clearly states the truth that can soothe human pain and grant genuine peace: knowing that everything is under Allah's control and submitting to Him.

The Root of Unrest: Seeing Events as Independent of Allah

At the heart of human emotional distress, anxiety, and fear lies the tendency to view events as coincidences that unfold outside Allah's control. This perspective condemns a person to live in constant unease and insecurity. For someone who believes they live in an unpredictable, uncontrollable world lives in constant fear that disaster could strike at any moment. Yet the Quran declares: "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear." (Al-Baqarah 286). This verse makes clear that the universe is not a randomly operating mechanism — every event is created with wisdom, and Allah will not place upon people a burden greater than they can carry. This divine assurance is an immense source of relief for the believer. One who knows that every event occurs within Allah's knowledge and permission, and that He will not impose an unbearable burden, evaluates hardships through a different lens. These difficulties are no longer chaotic, uncontrollable events — they gain meaning as part of a process of education and growth.

Shirk: The Hidden Source of Sorrow

The source of the river of sorrow that flows within us is, more often than we realize, the shirk we unconsciously commit. Shirk is not merely worshipping idols or adopting other deities. In modern times, shirk manifests in subtler and more concealed forms. When a person begins attributing absolute power and influence to beings other than Allah — when they view the will of others as powerful enough to determine their own fate — they have in fact begun to open the door to shirk. This brings about a profound fear and anxiety in the heart. For one now believes themselves dependent not on a single will, but on countless wills. They imagine that their boss, spouse, children, neighbors, society, the economy, politics — in short, everything — exerts an absolute influence over their life. This belief fragments them, causing them to live in

constant tension and fear. Yet the Quran reminds us of this truth: there is nothing in the universe that is ownerless. There is no chaos. There is no disorder. There is no aimlessness. Everything has a single owner. And the human being too has a single owner. A person who holds this understanding attributes every event to Allah and acts accordingly.

The Chaotic Effect of Shirk: Like Falling from the Sky

In the Quran, shirk is likened to a person falling from the sky and being torn apart, or being swept away by the wind to a distant place: "...without associating partners with Him. And whoever associates partners with Allah — it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds, or the wind carried him down to a remote place." (Al-Hajj 31). This verse vividly describes the chaotic state that shirk creates in the human soul. Just as one who falls from the sky is shattered to pieces, so too is the soul of one who attributes absolute power to forces other than Allah. Just as a person seized by a bird or swept away by the wind is carried helplessly from place to place, so too is the heart of one who falls into shirk tossed about by every kind of fear, anxiety, and unrest. For beginning to see any power or will other than Allah as absolute causes deep turmoil in the soul. In this state, a person feels ownerless and unprotected. Their heart lives in constant fear and anxiety. They believe that behind every event lies a different power, a different will, and they find themselves trapped between them all.

Tawhid: The Key to Spiritual Freedom

Knowing that Allah is the Creator of all things and their sole owner grants a person spiritual freedom. This understanding prevents one from becoming enslaved to others and being crushed under their influence. In Surah Az-Zumar, Allah says: *"Allah presents an example: a man belonging to several quarreling partners and a man belonging exclusively to one man — are they equal in comparison?"* (Az-Zumar 29). The example given in this verse is profoundly striking. Imagine a slave serving multiple masters who quarrel with one another and desire opposite things. How wretched that slave's condition would be! One says go right while another says go left. One says do this while another says don't do that. This slave lives in constant division, indecision, and unrest. Yet the slave belonging to a single master knows their command and acts accordingly — living in peace and stability. Shirk makes a person like that slave with quarreling masters. One who sees forces other than Allah as absolute tries to obey each of them, fears each of them, and answers to each of them. This spiritually tears them apart. But the one who holds to tawhid — who submits only to Allah — is truly free.

Submission and Spiritual Peace

When a person submits only to Allah, they become truly liberated. They are freed from being under the influence of people, from fearing their wrong behavior and their injustices. For they know that everything has a single owner, and every event that befalls them was created for their growth and maturation. This belief enables one to view life from an entirely different perspective. Events are no longer simply classified as "good" or "bad." Every event is seen as a message from Allah, a test, an

opportunity for education. When a hardship arises, one asks: "What does Allah wish to teach me through this difficulty? How can I benefit from the wisdom in this event?" This perspective removes a person from a victim mentality. They no longer see themselves as unfortunate, unlucky, someone upon whom bad things always happen. Rather, they see themselves as a traveler striving to mature by successfully passing the tests Allah has given them.

Emotional Shirk: The Dangers of Excessive Attachment to Others

Shirk does not merely distance one from Allah — it also humiliates a person before other people and objects. When a person becomes emotionally attached to another person or object to the degree that their life loses meaning without it, and when this attachment overshadows their bond with Allah, emotional shirk is at work. And this shirk leads to deep unrest, anxiety, and unhappiness. Yet the only true friend and support of the human being is Allah. People come and go, possessions are transient, positions are temporary. But Allah is everlasting and eternal. Whoever clings tightly to Him is never left alone, never left without an owner.

The Sole Owner of All Things: Allah

In Surah Ash-Shura, Allah says: "And you will not be able to escape in the earth, and you have not besides Allah any protector or helper." (Ash-Shura 31). This verse is both a warning and a glad tiding. The warning: it is impossible to flee from Allah and take refuge in a power outside Him. Nothing occurs beyond His will. The glad tiding: Allah is the friend and helper of the human being. Whoever takes refuge in Him is never left alone. The source of our pains and unrest is evaluating events independently of Allah and attributing power to others. This creates deep fear and anxiety in the soul. For how can a person find peace while believing they are in the grip of forces they cannot control or foresee? Yet the Quran clearly shows the path to true peace: to recognize every event as coming from Allah and to submit to Him. This is the key to spiritual peace.

Trusting in Allah's Wisdom

Allah has created everything with goodness and wisdom. This goodness is sometimes apparent, sometimes hidden. Sometimes it is understood immediately; sometimes it is recognized years later. But the believer knows that everything which comes from Allah — the All-Wise — necessarily contains wisdom. This belief grants a person extraordinary patience and resilience. When faced with hardship, they do not collapse or fall into despair. Rather, they say: "This difficulty must contain goodness for me. Even if I cannot see it now, Allah has created good for me in this event," and they look at the matter from a different angle. History, Quranic narratives, and life experience are full of examples showing how events that appeared bad eventually became means of great good. The Prophet Yusuf's being thrown into the well appeared as a disaster at the time, but ultimately led to his becoming a minister in Egypt. The Prophet Musa's mistake being exposed and his being forced to flee Egypt appeared as a loss, but the years he spent in Madyan prepared him for prophethood.

Everything from a Friend Is Beautiful

"Everything from a friend is beautiful" is a philosophy of life for the believer. A person who has taken Allah as their friend and submitted to Him sees every event that befalls them as a gift from this friend. This gift may sometimes be sweet, sometimes bitter. But because both come from the same friend, both are beautiful, precious, and meaningful. This perspective saves a person from complaint, resentment, and rebellion. They no longer wear themselves out asking "why me, why now, why like this?" Rather, they ask: "What beauty lies in this event for me, what lesson, what opportunity for growth?" This understanding does not eliminate pain. But it adds meaning to pain. And a meaningful pain is far more bearable than a meaningless one. When a person knows why they are suffering — when they know that this pain is temporary and will lead to something good — they can endure it with patience.

The Path to Peace

Human beings are, by nature, creatures in search of peace. Seeking this peace in the external world, in material success, or in other people is futile. True peace lies in knowing Allah, submitting to Him, and tracing everything back to Him. The source of our pain is seeing events as independent of Allah, attributing absolute power to others, and falling into shirk. This understanding pushes us into chaos, fear, and anxiety. But the understanding of tawhid — knowing that Allah alone is the owner of all things — rescues us from this chaos and leads us to peace. Clinging tightly to Allah will soothe the unrest of this world and lead us to eternal happiness. Submitting to Him opens the door to true freedom and peace. Recognizing His hand in every event, evaluating all things within the framework of His wisdom, brings us happiness in both this world and the next. Let us not forget: everything from a Friend is beautiful. And Allah is the closest friend, the most merciful guardian of His servants. To trust in Him, to rely on Him, to take refuge in Him — is to hold fast to the most secure handhold. And this handhold never breaks.

The Love of Allah and Shirk: Humanity's Most Critical Choice

The Direction of the Heart

Human life is a journey woven together by choices made one after another. Some of these choices are everyday and temporary, while others are strategic decisions that profoundly affect a person's life in this world and the next. According to Islam, the most critical choice a person can make is determining the direction of their heart. What they make room for in their heart, what they love, what they value — all of this shapes their entire life. At the center of these choices lies the position of one's love for Allah.

One of the cornerstones of Islamic belief is the absolute oneness of Allah (tawhid) and the necessity that the love felt for Him surpasses all else. However, by nature, humans tend to attach themselves to many beings, people, and values. Such attachments are legitimate as long as they remain below the love of Allah and in accordance with His pleasure. But when these loves take precedence over the love of Allah or are placed on equal footing with Him, the greatest sin — shirk — occurs.

What Is Shirk? Definition and Dimensions

Shirk comes from the Arabic root "sharik," meaning "to associate" or "to make equal." In Islamic terminology, shirk means associating partners with Allah — acting contrary to His absolute oneness and uniqueness. This does not mean merely adopting another deity; it also means directing toward other beings the love, reverence, obedience, and devotion that are owed to Allah alone.

Shirk can manifest at different levels and in different forms. Its most explicit form is accepting a being other than Allah as a god and worshipping it. However, shirk also has subtler, more insidious forms. One of these is placing another being on equal footing with Allah — or even loving it more — in the love of the heart. This is the situation in which a person, an object, an ideology, or anything else occupies in the heart the position that belongs to Allah.

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 165, sheds light on this matter:

"And of the people are some who take other than Allah as equals. They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah."

This verse emphasizes that the love of believers for Allah is incomparable to anything else, while those who commit shirk direct toward other beings the love that should be reserved for Allah.

The Theological and Spiritual Dimension of Shirk

According to Islamic belief, Allah is the absolute Creator, the Owner of all things, the source of all power, and the One to Whom all things return. He is the absolute Being, beyond time and space, in need of nothing, yet everything is in need of Him. In this context, loving another being in place of Allah — or alongside Him — amounts to denying this unique station of His.

The Creator-creation relationship is Islam's fundamental ontological distinction. Allah is the Creator; everything else is created. Every created being owes its existence to Allah and cannot continue to exist without His permission. Given this reality, placing a created being above the Creator, or equating it with Him, is a logical and metaphysical contradiction.

Humans are by nature programmed to love, to attach, and to value. However, these emotional and spiritual inclinations must be properly directed. It is natural to love one's children, spouse, friends, and beautiful things — and Islam does not forbid such loves. But these loves must be subordinate to the love of Allah and shaped within the framework of His pleasure. When a person loves their child in the way Allah commands, that love becomes an act of worship. But if they love their child more than Allah and abandon His commands for the sake of their child, that love transforms into shirk.

The Psychological and Spiritual Consequences of Shirk

According to Islam, the human heart can find peace only through Allah. The heart is soothed by the remembrance of Allah. This truth is expressed in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28:

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest."

When the heart turns toward a being other than Allah, it encounters that being's limitations, transience, and weakness. Because everything created is imperfect, transient, and full of flaws. When the heart seeks the infinite and the perfect, yet clings to what is finite and flawed, it experiences deep disappointment and a sense of emptiness.

This aligns with a truth that modern psychology also points to: human beings need an absolute source of meaning and value. When this need is not met, or when it is misdirected, emotional problems such as existential emptiness, a sense of meaninglessness, depression, and anxiety arise.

Shirk brings a deep constriction to a person's heart. This constriction may not be apparent from the outside. The person may be wealthy, healthy, and socially connected, yet feel a deep inner restlessness, dissatisfaction, and emptiness. This is the natural consequence of being cut off from Allah. Because when the heart loses its connection to the One who created it, it is as if it has lost its true home.

In Surah Ta-Ha, verse 124, it is stated:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance — indeed, he will have a depressed life."

This "depressed life" does not refer only to material hardship; it primarily signifies a spiritual and inner constriction, a distress. Even if the person possesses everything, cut off from Allah, they live in an inner prison.

The Worldly Cost of Shirk

The cost of shirk is not paid only in the afterlife; it also manifests in various ways in the life of this world. While these costs are generally spiritual and psychological in nature, they sometimes bring social and moral consequences as well.

Constriction and Restlessness in the Heart

A person who commits shirk feels a constant restlessness in their heart. When they attain what they love, they are not satisfied, because that thing is finite and cannot meet the infinite needs of a human being. They live with the fear of losing what they love, because everything other than Allah can be lost. When what they love harms them or fails to meet their expectations, they experience deep disappointment.

This is the root cause of the widespread spiritual ailments of the modern age. People seek happiness in transient things such as money, fame, career, and relationships, and give their hearts to these things. Yet these things cannot provide the infinite peace the heart is searching for. As a result, people live in a state of constant dissatisfaction and a sense of incompleteness.

False Dependencies

Loving something other than Allah excessively means becoming dependent on it.

This dependency limits a person's freedom. One becomes a slave to what one loves — whether that is a person, a substance, a habit, or a goal.

Islam's understanding of tawhid, by making a person a servant of Allah alone, actually offers true freedom. For one who is independent of everything other than Allah is truly free. But one who becomes attached to something other than Allah becomes enslaved to it.

Loss of Meaning and Existential Crisis

A person who makes a transient being the center of their life faces a profound existential crisis when that being disappears or loses its value. A mother who lives for her children faces this when her children grow up and leave home; a person who sacrifices everything for their career faces it upon retirement; someone who lives for a romantic partner faces it when the relationship ends. Each confronts a deep existential crisis.

But a person who places Allah at the center of their life loses nothing. Because Allah is the Permanent and the Unchanging. The bond formed with Him cannot be severed even by death — on the contrary, it grows stronger.

The Otherworldly Cost of Shirk

The truly heavy cost of shirk is in the afterlife. According to Islam, Allah may forgive sins, but He has clearly declared that He will not forgive the person who dies having associated partners with Him. In Surah An-Nisa, verse 48:

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills."

This is one of Islam's most absolute rulings. Shirk is the only sin that will not be forgiven. Because shirk is the greatest ingratitude and rebellion against Allah. Allah created the human being from nothing, gave him countless blessings, created him as a noble creature, and endowed him with reason and free will. Despite all of this, to love another in Allah's place or alongside Him is the greatest injustice.

The punishment in the afterlife differs from worldly suffering. Worldly pains are temporary and can end. But the punishment in the hereafter is eternal. Moreover, this punishment is not merely physical — it is spiritual and profound in nature. The greatest torment is to be deprived of Allah's mercy, to be expelled from His presence, and to be kept far from closeness to Him.

The final part of Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 165 emphasizes this reality:

"...If only they who have wronged would consider that when they see the punishment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment."

This verse states that those who commit shirk will only understand the truth when they see the punishment — but by then, regret will be of no benefit.

The Love of Allah in Believers

The love that believers have for Allah differs in quality and quantity from every other kind of love. This love resides in the deepest place of the heart and encompasses the entirety of a person's being. For a believer, the love of Allah is the center of life, the reference point for decisions, and the source of peace.

The Characteristics of Love for Allah

1. Absoluteness: Believers love Allah unconditionally, with no strings attached. This love is without conditions or reservations.

2. Priority: The love of Allah precedes all other loves. In any conflict, the believer always chooses Allah's pleasure. They love their children, spouse, wealth, and life — but they do not love any of these more than Allah.

3. Transformative Power: The love of Allah changes and transforms a person. This love is not merely an emotional state but also an active commitment. One who loves Allah follows His commands, avoids His prohibitions, and takes joy in remembering Him.

4. Source of Peace: The love of Allah brings deep peace and tranquility to the heart. The believer knows that Allah is by their side in every situation. This awareness strengthens and comforts them.

The Manifestations of Love for Allah

The love of Allah does not remain an abstract feeling; it expresses itself in concrete ways in a person's life:

- Worship: One who loves Allah takes pleasure in worshipping Him. Prayers, fasting, dhikr, and supplication are not burdensome obligations but moments of meeting.

- Obedience: One who loves Allah sees following His commands not as a compulsion but as a privilege. Doing what pleases Him brings happiness.

- Patience: The love of Allah makes it easier to show patience in hardship. Because the believer knows that the difficulties they experience are by Allah's decree and trusts in His wisdom.

- Gratitude: One who loves Allah becomes grateful for His blessings. They see every blessing as a manifestation of Allah's love.

- Remembrance: Remembering Allah is the sweetest occupation for one who loves Him. The heart finds peace and expands in His remembrance.

The Importance of Making the Right Choice

Human life is shaped by choices. The most critical choice is the direction of the heart. The heart either turns toward Allah or toward something other than Him. There is no middle path. For the heart must have a master — it either becomes a servant of Allah or a slave to another.

Islam guides people toward the right choice. This choice is not a simple decision but

a conscious orientation. The right choice is to love Allah above all things and to place servitude to Him at the center of life. This choice brings peace in this world and the next. The wrong choice — placing something other than Allah in His place — leads the person to restlessness in this world and to eternal loss in the hereafter.

The Dangers of Shirk Facing Today's People

The modern age has given rise to new forms of shirk. Today's person, even without worshipping idols, can fall into shirk in different ways:

- Materialism: Making money, possessions, and property the purpose of life and abandoning Allah's commands for their sake.

- Hedonism: Placing pleasure and enjoyment above all else and violating Allah's prohibitions.

- Narcissism: Deifying the self and putting one's own desires before Allah's commands.

- Ideologies: Showing toward an ideology the devotion that should be given to Allah.

- Idolizing People: Showing toward a leader, a scholar, or any person the absolute obedience that belongs to Allah alone.

These modern forms of shirk, though not as explicit as traditional idol worship, are equally dangerous. Because the result is the same: the heart turns away from Allah and gives His place to another.

Preventing the Greatest Loss

For a human being, the greatest loss is to lose Allah. Because one who loses Him loses everything. But one who possesses Him, even if they lose everything else, has truly lost nothing.

Shirk is the cause of this greatest loss. It distances the person from Allah, deprives them of His mercy, and leads them to eternal ruin. Whereas tawhid — knowing Allah as One and loving Him alone — brings a person to salvation, peace, and eternal happiness.

The call of Islam is clear: Open your heart only to Allah, love Him above all else, trust in Him, turn toward Him. For only in Him is there true peace, true meaning, and true happiness. Everything other than Allah is transient, imperfect, and finite. Only He is eternal and perfect.

This choice is one that every person must make for themselves. And it is the most important of all choices. For this choice determines not only this world but eternal life as well. To lose the love of Allah is the greatest mistake a person can make; to gain Him is the greatest success.

The Superiority of the Quran in Islam and the Danger of Shirk: An Analysis of Doctrinal Deviations

Islam has been lived and interpreted throughout history under various social and political conditions. However, this diversity and these interpretations have sometimes led to a departure from the Quran's original message. Traditional religious understandings, sectarian formations, and hadith-based rulings have over time given rise to practices that conflict with the foundational thought of Islamic belief.

The Quran: The Sole Legislative Source of Islam

One of the fundamental principles of Islamic belief is the reality that the Quran was revealed by Allah and constitutes Islam's source of ruling. This is not merely a theoretical understanding but a principle explicitly stated within the Quran itself. Verse 44 of Surah Al-Ma'idah presents an exceptionally clear expression on this matter: "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — those are the disbelievers." This verse clearly establishes that the source of ruling belongs to Allah and that Muslims must adhere to these rulings in every area of their lives. Grounding the doctrinal and practical lives of Muslims in the Quran is an understanding befitting the very essence of Islam. Allah has presented in the Quran all the rulings necessary for organizing human life and has not permitted people to transgress these rulings. In this context, the Quran offers guidance not only in the area of worship but in many fields such as social life, law, economics, and societal order.

Traditional Understandings and Deviations

Throughout history, the manner in which religion has been practiced in Islamic societies has changed under the influence of various factors. Geographical conditions, cultural structures, political authorities, and social needs have all played a role in shaping religious understanding. However, as a result of these contextual factors, practices contrary to the clear rulings of the Quran have sometimes been legitimized. For example, there are matters that have been declared forbidden through certain sectarian traditions or hadith, despite not being forbidden in the Quran. This situation has unknowingly bound Muslims in chains, steering them to be governed by human rulings rather than by the rulings of Allah. Such a structure means departing from the fundamental principles of Islam and leads people into a false belief.

Shirk: Its Definition, Types, and Dangers

According to Islamic belief, shirk means associating partners with Allah. However, the concept of shirk carries a broader meaning beyond merely direct deification. Shirk means replacing Allah's rulings with other rulings, distorting Allah's commands, and presenting these distorted rulings to people as if they were religion. Verse 23 of Surah Al-An'am clearly demonstrates the consequence of this situation in the hereafter: "Then their only plea will be to say, 'By Allah, our Lord, we were never mushrik.'" This verse states that the mushrikeen will attempt to clear themselves in the hereafter but will fail. Even if these individuals prayed, fasted, and attended

gatherings of knowledge in this world, the acts of worship they built upon a false belief will not save them. What is important at this point is that acts of worship gain meaning not merely through their outward form, but through the correctness of the intention they contain and their doctrinal foundation. Acts of worship built upon a false doctrine hold no value before Allah, no matter how completely they are performed.

The Importance of Unity in the Source of Ruling

The pluralization of the source of ruling in Islam leads to serious problems in terms of societal order and individual peace. The existence of more than one source of ruling in a society inevitably causes conflicts, duality, and social agitation. Verse 113 of Surah Hud presents an important structure that emphasizes this danger: *"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest the Fire touch you. You have no protectors other than Allah. Then you will not be helped."* This verse expresses that not only supporting unjust rulers but even loving them, appreciating them, and adopting their views can drive a person to the torment of hell. If we think of this in a modern context, supporting those who misrepresent religion, those who distort religion, and placing their rulings above the rulings of the Quran amounts to supporting the propagation of a form of oppression. This will cause the person to be held accountable in the hereafter.

The Relationship Between the View of the Majority and the Truth

People tend to frequently use numerical majority as a measure to determine right from wrong. If something is accepted by many people, it is assumed to be correct. However, the Quran clearly establishes that this thinking is wrong. Verse 116 of Surah Al-An'am presents a very clear warning on this matter: *"If you were to follow most of those on earth, they would lead you away from the path of Allah. They follow nothing but assumption, and they do nothing but conjecture."* This verse emphasizes several important truths:

First, the opinions of the majority are not always correct. The great majority of people can err and hold false beliefs. Second, an opinion accepted by the majority is nothing but conjecture — that is, assumption and speculation. Third, the result of following the majority is deviation and distance from guidance. In this context, the correctness of religious understanding must not be determined by numerical majority. The measure is the Quran alone. Everything that is in harmony with the Quran is correct; everything that conflicts with the Quran is wrong. This is a valid principle in matters of religion as well as in matters of culture and tradition.

The Influence and Responsibility of Traditional Opinion Leaders

Throughout history in Islamic societies, certain individuals have been accepted as opinion leaders or religious scholars, and their views have gained authority equal to or greater than the rulings of the Quran. This structure has led to the personalization and sanctification of religious understanding. However, no human being carries enough authority to replace the Quran. Scholars, learned individuals, and leaders are people who endeavor to convey the Quran correctly. However, they can make

mistakes and put forward erroneous views. If a scholar's view conflicts with the Quran, the Quran must be preferred. Beyond this, supporting traditional opinion leaders, sanctifying them, legitimizing their false rulings, and presenting them to society means becoming a partner in the wrongs they commit. A person in such a situation will stand accountable alongside these opinion leaders in the hereafter.

The Validity of Worship and the Role of Doctrine

In Islam, acts of worship are not merely physical movements. Worship is an act performed by body, mind, and soul together. If the doctrine is wrong, the act of worship becomes invalid. A person may pray in a completely correct manner, keep the fast without omission, and wish to give zakat — but if these acts of worship are grounded in a false belief, they will have no value before Allah. Because in Islam, worship must be sincere, pure, and directed solely toward Allah. Any partner, any intermediary, any tradition, or any human being can interfere with this purity and render acts of worship invalid. In this context, acts of worship built upon tradition are invalid due to the wrongness of their doctrinal foundation, regardless of how perfect their form may be. The Muslim, during worship, must keep only Allah in view, worship Allah alone, and seek only Allah's pleasure.

The Sufficiency of the Quran

The Quran is entirely sufficient as regards Islam's system of ruling. Allah has presented in the Quran all the rulings that human beings need to organize their lives. The Quran presents a completely harmonious system of rulings containing no contradictions within itself. This system is sufficient to meet all the needs of human beings.

Salvation in Islam is realized only under the guidance of the Quran. Traditional understandings, sectarian formations, and hadith-based rulings, if they conflict with the Quran, can unknowingly lead Muslims into shirk. This danger is not merely theoretical; it is a practical reality with serious consequences in the hereafter. There are questions every Muslim must ask themselves at this point: Upon what do I base my faith? According to whose rulings do I organize my life? Are tradition and traditional opinion leaders my measure — or are the clear rulings of the Quran? If in answering these questions, tradition, a sect, or opinion leaders take priority, the situation is a serious problem. Verse 44 of Surah Al-Ma'idah stands as a warning directed at all Muslims: "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — those are the disbelievers." This verse demonstrates that the validity of religion is tied to the Quran. The source of ruling is Allah, and what He revealed is the Quran. Beyond this, everything else — no matter how respected or traditional — holds no validity in matters of religion. Every individual who wishes to understand and live Islam must hold firmly to the guidance of the Quran, question traditions, and whenever a conflict arises between tradition and the Quran, always choose the Quran. Only in this way can doctrinal purity and preparation for the hereafter be achieved. Otherwise, one has unknowingly entered into a deviation, and this deviation may not be recognized until the Day of Reckoning arrives.

The Human Soul in the Conflict Between Shirk and Love: The Anatomy of Spiritual Emptiness

Mushrik: The Anatomy of Spiritual Downfall

The existential journey of the human being is, at its core, a process of discernment. To define the boundaries between right and wrong, love and lust, the divine and the worldly — this is humanity's oldest and most fundamental concern. Yet these seemingly simple distinctions frequently blur within the complex fabric of the human heart. Particularly when love and spiritual devotion are at stake, a person can easily lose their center and, unknowingly, fall into the dark abyss of shirk.

In Islam, the term shirk is used to describe this dangerous drift. Literally meaning "partnership," shirk carries a far deeper theological significance: associating partners with Allah. Yet this is not always a conscious choice. More often, it is a silent deviation that settles into the heart unnoticed — a blind wandering.

Shirk: The Anatomy of Spiritual Collapse

Shirk is the first sign of a destruction that begins within the inner world of the human being. The Qur'an, in Surah Al-Hajj, verse 31, describes the terrifying nature of this danger through a powerful metaphor: "Hanifs are those who do not associate partners with Allah. And whoever associates partners with Allah is like one who has fallen from the sky — and the birds snatch him, or the wind sweeps him to a remote place."

This verse signals that shirk is not so much a physical catastrophe as it is a spiritual collapse. The person falling from the sky — this is not merely a bodily death, but a ruin of the soul. A being snatched by a bird, swept away by the wind, no longer belongs to itself. It becomes an entity moved without will, an existence with no owner.

Shirk begins at the level of the heart. For another love to take the place of the love of Allah is not simply a religious error; it is the displacement of the human being's own center. As long as one exists, one is a creature searching for a center, seeking an anchor. If that center is not Allah, the person clings to other centers: a human being, an image, a passion, an excitement. "Even though in the world they may chase a fragment of happiness," the one who has fallen into shirk "is ultimately swept into a great emptiness." This contradiction is the deepest tragedy of the human soul's spiritual makeup — because every attempt to fill that emptiness only creates deeper voids.

Love: The Gateway to the Most Dangerous Deviation

Love has been the central subject of art, literature, and philosophy throughout human history. Yet from an Islamic perspective, love — when not properly oriented — is the emotion most swiftly leading the human being into shirk.

What is love? In Hegel's words, it is the human endeavor to find oneself in another being. Yet this is philosophically paradoxical: to seek one's own existence in the existence of another is inevitably to lose one's own existence. The words of Turkish

classical music artist İbrahim Tatlıses — "No branch left for me to hold, I have withered like a tree" — point to the very heart of this paradox. While clinging to the one they love, the person is in truth drying themselves out. Every act of clinging is simultaneously a dissolving; every attachment, a diminishment.

The Process by Which Love Transforms Into Shirk

Love undergoes an imperceptible transformation over time. At first, when the beloved enters the heart, the person calls it "affection." Yet gradually, that affection turns into "obsession," and then into "worship." And it is at that moment that shirk begins. "The moment shirk begins is the moment the beloved is the very first thought to cross one's mind."

This point is critical. For the Qur'an warns the human being: "And among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals to Him, loving them as they should love Allah." (Al-Baqarah: 165) This verse is clear on the matter of love's rightful object. Love must hold Allah at its center. Every other love must be a reflection of this supreme love. Otherwise, love ceases to be a servant and becomes a lord.

While attaching to the beloved, the person — consciously or not — deifies them. They strive to see the beloved as flawless, turn a blind eye to their faults, and relinquish everything for their sake. This is the purest form of deification.

The Trap of the Image: Images That Vanish Like Shadows

The mushrik, more often than not, begins to cling to an image. The physical beauty of the beloved, their mannerisms, their words — these images become an icon at the level of the heart. "The person clings tightly to the image and leans their back against it." Yet this image is, by its very nature, transient. Like a shadow, it appears with the sun and disappears with the sun.

In time, the beloved changes, ages, grows, departs — or the person's initial enchantment shatters and they begin to see reality. And at that moment — the moment the shadow vanishes — the person enters free fall. "The shadow eventually disappears and the person goes into free fall. It is then that the person comes face to face with spiritual emptiness."

This emptiness is not a physical void. No crowd at a bus stop, no gathering of friends, no new love can fill it — because the emptiness is interior.

The Nature of Melancholy: The Crystallization of Pain

Shirk, at the outset, is painful. But this pain is significant precisely because it is a pain gone unrecognized and unprocessed. Over time, this pain transforms into melancholy. The etymology of melancholy — "black bile" — is the embodied form of the human being's emotional state. The melancholic person lives an endless grief; within this grief, causality remains obscure.

Yet the melancholy caused by shirk is different: its source is clear — it arises from the heart being structured around a false center. "Melancholy is the outward

reflection of the emotional state the person inhabits. The melancholic person internalizes their pain and continuously relives it." That is, the melancholic person does not merely feel their pain — they exalt it, make it an identity. They identify with their own suffering.

In time, this pain subsides. The person "washes their face and comes to their senses." Yet here lies a critical point: "The person who does not know why pain has besieged their heart will make the same mistake again when they encounter another image." This is the most bitter cycle repeated throughout human history. The heart does not burn again because it did not bleed — but because it attributed the bleeding to the wrong cause. The person does not see the source of shirk; they only appear to have seen its symptoms. And no sooner does one wound heal than they begin to open a new one.

True Love: A Life Centered on Allah

The Qur'an clearly shows the way to break this curse: "But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah." (Al-Baqarah: 165) This is not merely a matter of love's direction — it is a hierarchy of love. True love is not a circle but a pyramid. The apex points toward Allah. All other points of the pyramid — people, beings, emotions — are arranged neatly around this center. Each love is accountable to this central love. Each attachment is but a branch of this supreme devotion.

"Love must be directed not to the beloved, but solely to Allah." This does not mean forbidding the love of human beings. On the contrary, it means making the love of human beings wholesome. For to love a person within the framework of one's devotion to Allah means accepting that person's faults, shortcomings, and transience as well. This love is not the deification of the other, but the art of loving them within their human limitations.

"True love is love for Allah, and this love eradicates every form of shirk and deviation." Why? Because love directed toward Allah is an infinite love. Every love tied to the finite finds its rightful place before this infinity. No human being can claim to deserve this love. No beauty can personify it.

Breaking the Vicious Cycle: The Necessity of Inner Inquiry

"Without descending into the depths of the human heart, one cannot find peace through external consolations." The modern world offers countless ways to distract on the surface rather than descend into the depths of the heart. A telling observation: a person in depression enters a new relationship and cheers up somewhat. One might take this for healing. Yet it is false healing — because the heart has never descended into its own depths to look at the root cause. It has merely been covered over by another image.

True healing comes when one questions their heart. "Why did I associate a partner with Allah? Why did I deify another? What should the center of my heart have been? Why did I cling to other centers?" When the answers to these questions are sought, the person begins a genuine transformation.

This transformation is, in a sense, a spiritual excavation. The person begins to remove all the false attachments, all the counterfeit loves, all the erroneous centers that have accumulated in the depths of the heart. This is painful. Deeply painful. Yet this pain is healing.

The Soul's Beggary: A Pile of Stones Against the Void

The mushrik — at the outset, the person infatuated with their beloved — seeks "a shoulder": "The soul, trapped in the hidden corners of the heart, turns outward, joining streets, stones, and people." This is a powerful image. The soul within the heart begins to seep outward. Why? Because the inner world has been corrupted; its center has been lost. The soul begins to search outside for what it has lost inside.

It is then that the person begins to cling to "stones" — not only to people, but to objects, to habits, to work. Whatever they cling to, the person always receives the same pain in return. "They seek a shoulder, but that shoulder too offers them no real solution." Because the problem is not in the shoulder. The problem is that, with each shoulder shared, the person still carries the same defect of the heart.

The Qur'an's Warning: The Reality of Torment

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 165, is not merely a warning — it is also a system of signs: "If only those who have wronged would see, when they see the punishment, that power belongs entirely to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment."

What is this "torment"? Is it a punishment in the hereafter, or is it the state of the soul lived in this very world? Perhaps both. For if the center of the heart has been displaced, what else can come from that heart? A melancholic life, hollow relationships, an endless search, desires that are never satisfied — these are the worldly torment of shirk.

The Heart Must Be Filled with Nothing But the Love of Allah

The human heart cannot house more than one center under its roof. If Allah is not at the center, other things begin to pile up there without a roof. "In this world where love and shirk are intertwined, the human heart must be filled solely with the love of Allah — and every external love and attachment must go no further than being an imitation of this supreme love."

This does not deny love between human beings. On the contrary, it places it within a proper framework. Spouse, child, friend, mother — all these loves become clear in the light of love for Allah. They are sacred bonds, yet only on the condition that they remain the arms and servants of devotion to Allah.

Throughout history, humanity has tried to forget this truth and has collapsed every time; and when it begins to remember, it has been able to rise again. For the very reason for the human being's existence lies in this center. The one who has found their center has found beauty; the one who has lost their center has, as Tatlıses said, "withered like a tree."

Only when the human being finds Allah in the depths of their heart do they discover, together with their truest existence, meaning and peace. This is the fundamental law of the human soul's spiritual makeup — and, unfortunately, it is most often recognized far too late.

The Essence of Islam: The Heart's Surrender and Societal Salvation

Islam, rooted in the Arabic word meaning "to submit," finds its true meaning not merely in spoken declaration but in a sincere devotion that takes place in the deepest recesses of the heart. Today, the concept of "Muslim" is largely used as a geographical, cultural, or demographic label — a departure from Islam's very essence. Millions of people registered as "Muslim" on population records remain Muslim in name only, without undergoing the heartfelt and spiritual transformation this religion demands. Yet Islam is not a phrase written on an identity card; it is a way of life in which a person dedicates their entire being to God, surrenders to His will, and lives that surrender in every moment.

The Qur'an draws a clear distinction between believer (mu'min) and Muslim. In verse 14 of Surah Al-Hujurat, the following is said regarding the desert Arabs: "The bedouins say, 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not yet believed; but say instead, 'We have submitted,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts.'" This verse highlights the fundamental difference between outward submission and the heart's inner transformation. Being Muslim may mean fulfilling Islam's formal requirements; but being a believer requires grasping the spirit of those requirements and connecting with God through the heart.

Faith and Islam: Two Distinct Concepts, One Goal

In Islamic history and in the Qur'an, the concepts of faith (iman) and Islam are treated in their different dimensions. Islam means a person's submission to God and His messenger, and outward acceptance of Islam's commandments — concretized through acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and giving alms. Faith, however, goes far beyond this. Faith encompasses the heart's deep devotion to God, trust in Him, love, reverence, and complete surrender.

This distinction is not merely a theoretical debate; it is a reality with very significant practical consequences. A person may appear from the outside to be fulfilling all Islamic duties, yet if their heart is distant from God, those acts of worship become nothing more than mechanical rituals. The Qur'anic verse "Say: Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the worlds" (Al-An'am 162) emphasizes that a true believer's every moment and every breath must be dedicated to God. This means life is not lived in fragments — no separation is drawn between worship and daily existence.

Dhikr: Merely Remembering God, or Turning Toward Him?

The concept of dhikr holds a central place in Islam. Yet dhikr should not be understood merely as repeating God's names or reciting certain prayers. In the Qur'anic sense, dhikr means remembering God, turning toward His revelation, feeling

His presence in every area of life, and living in accordance with His will. It is a person's glorification of God through their entire life — never forgetting Him and taking refuge in Him in every circumstance.

Abandoning the remembrance of God is the beginning of the path toward shirk — associating partners with God. Surah Taha, verse 124, states: "And whoever turns away from My remembrance — indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." This verse shows that turning away from God harms not only the afterlife but this worldly life as well. The "depressed life" manifests not only as material poverty but as spiritual emptiness, restlessness, loss of meaning, and societal decay.

At the root of the difficulties experienced by many Muslim societies today lies this spiritual void. The Islamic world, endowed with rich natural resources, large populations, and strategic locations, unfortunately grapples with political instability, economic hardship, educational deficiencies, and social injustice. The fundamental reason is the departure from God's revelation and the reduction of Islam to traditional rituals and sectarian interpretations.

Shirk: Merely a Doctrinal Error?

In Islam, shirk — associating partners with God — is considered the gravest of sins. In Surah Luqman, verse 13, Luqman's counsel to his son reads: "O my son, do not associate anything with God. Indeed, association with Him is great injustice." Shirk is not only the worship of idols; placing absolute trust in beings, powers, people, or systems other than God — seeking relief from them — is also shirk.

In the modern age, shirk can take different forms. Money, power, fame, ideologies, nationalism, leaders, or even religious sects can become forms of shirk when placed in God's stead. If a person organizes their life not according to God's will but according to other things, and dedicates their heart not to God but to worldly desires, they are engaged in shirk.

This produces serious consequences both individually and socially. Shirk erodes a person's surrender to God and makes them dependent on other entities. This dependency leads to the loss of freedom, inner restlessness, and social injustice — because no power other than God possesses absolute justice, mercy, and wisdom. Humans, institutions, and ideologies can err, make mistakes, and oppress. But God's will is perfect and just. For this reason, surrendering solely to God is the path to true freedom and peace.

Traditional Religious Understanding and Turning Away from God

The prevalent religious understanding in Muslim lands today unfortunately rests on traditional hadiths, sectarian jurisprudence, and cultural practices. The Qur'an — Islam's foundational source — has been pushed to the margins, replaced by centuries-old interpretations and narrations. This amounts to turning away from God's word and granting absolute authority to human interpretations — which is itself a form of shirk.

The Qur'an is a universal guide valid for all times, requiring people in every age to return to it directly. Yet sects, orders, and traditional religious outlooks have interpreted the Qur'an through their own lenses, forcing it into fixed molds. Over time these molds have hardened into immovable dogmas, and Islam's dynamic, life-giving message has been reduced to a rigid set of rules.

This approach amounts to abandoning the remembrance of God. For true dhikr is reading God's word, understanding it, reflecting upon it, and putting it into practice. Yet in traditional religious understanding, the Qur'an has often become a text recited without comprehension — sought for its blessing, but its content ignored. This is a dangerous approach that kills the spirit of Islam and reduces it to a merely formal religion.

The Trials of Muslim Societies and the Role of Shirk

Looking today at countries with large Muslim populations, we find they possess abundant oil reserves, strategic locations, and young demographics. Yet most of these countries struggle with serious problems: poverty, unemployment, inadequate education, political instability, and social injustice. The fundamental reason for this paradox is the departure from God's revelation and the fall into shirk.

As stated in Surah Taha, verse 124, those who abandon the remembrance of God will have a constrained life. This constraint is not only material deprivation but spiritual collapse as well. When a society does not truly surrender to God, it drifts away from justice, compassion, and honesty. Corruption, oppression, and wrongdoing become widespread. Trust among people erodes. Social solidarity gives way to selfishness.

The solution to these problems lies not in extracting more oil, purchasing more weapons, or imitating the West. The solution is returning to the essence of Islam, properly understanding the Qur'an, and putting it into practice. God's revelation forms the foundation of social justice, economic prosperity, scientific progress, and spiritual peace — but this revelation must not merely be read; it must be understood and lived.

True Islam: The Heart's Transformation and the Rebuilding of Life

True Islam is a way of life in which a person dedicates their entire being to God, ordering every moment according to His pleasure. It is not limited to attending Friday prayers, fasting in Ramadan, or performing the Hajj. True Islam is being honest in business, acting fairly in trade, being merciful within the family, contributing to society, protecting the environment, championing justice, and standing against oppression.

Surah Al-An'am, verse 162, expresses this truth most beautifully: "Say: Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the worlds." This verse shows that in a believer's life there is no division between worship and daily existence. Every moment, every action, every thought is dedicated to God. This is not a totalitarian religious understanding — quite the contrary, it is a liberating perspective. For a person bows to no authority, power, or pressure other than God.

True Islam also encourages reason, knowledge, and critical thinking. The Qur'an calls people to think, investigate, and question. The verse "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding" (Al-Imran 190) underscores the importance of intellect and thought. Islam is grounded not in dogmatism but in conscious faith. Therefore, questioning traditional understandings, reading the Qur'an directly, and striving to comprehend it is every believer's right and responsibility.

The Key to Societal Salvation: Tawhid and Surrender

The only way for Muslim societies to escape their present difficulties is to return to the understanding of tawhid — the oneness of God — and to live in complete surrender to Him. Tawhid means believing in God's oneness and uniqueness, worshiping Him alone, and making His will the foundation of every area of life: politics, economics, education, law, and social relations.

Avoiding shirk means keeping away from every kind of idol. These idols may be visible or invisible: ideologies, leaders, traditions, sects, nationalism, materialism. Whatever is placed in God's stead is an idol — and every idol robs a person of their freedom, their peace, and their true happiness.

The warning of Surah Luqman, verse 13, holds true for every age: "Do not associate anything with God, for association is indeed great injustice." This injustice is not only a wrong done to God; it is a wrong a person does to themselves. For when a person surrenders to God, they reach their true self, their innate nature (fitra). When they drift away from God, they drift away from their own essence and become lost.

Surrendering with the Heart

Islam is not an identity — it is a way of life. Being Muslim is not merely wearing a label; it is surrendering to God with heart, soul, and body. This surrender cannot be confined to an outward form; it occurs in the heart's depths and is reflected across the whole of life.

Today, the notion of "Muslim country" needs to be reconsidered, and Islam must be lived in its true meaning. This requires questioning traditional religious understandings, placing the Qur'an at the center, avoiding shirk, and holding firmly to God's revelation. Only through such a transformation can individual peace and societal prosperity become possible.

Abandoning the remembrance of God leads to a constrained existence and spiritual blindness. Turning toward God is the key to salvation — in this world and the next. True Islam is the heart opening to God, the mind being illuminated, and life being rebuilt according to His pleasure. Walking this path is both an individual responsibility and a collective duty.

In conclusion, returning to the essence of Islam — sincerely connecting with God through faith, understanding and living His revelation, avoiding shirk, and placing remembrance at the center of life — is the guarantee of both individual salvation and societal peace.

Modern Tawhid Struggle: A Search for Faith Purified of Mushrik

The Principle of Tawhid: The Most Fundamental Call in Human History

The principle of tawhid lying at the heart of Islam has been the most fundamental and most radical religious call throughout human history. Believing in Allah and worshipping Him alone must stand at the center of a believer's life. Yet history is filled with painful examples of how people have strayed from this pure and simple truth — how, for various reasons, they have deified beings other than Allah, sanctified them, and submitted to them. In Islam, this deviation is called "shirk," and it is defined in the Quran as the only sin that will not be forgiven.

The Idols of Noah's People: The First Seeds of Shirk

The Quran, in verse 23 of Surah Nuh, presents an important historical record concerning the origins of shirk belief by giving the names of certain figures that the people of our Prophet Noah had idolized: "And they said: Do not ever abandon your gods; do not abandon Wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr."

These five names are the names of figures considered sacred and deified among the people of that era. According to Islamic sources, these idols were originally righteous individuals who, after their deaths, were memorialized by their people; over time these commemorations transformed into worship, and they were ultimately accepted as deities alongside Allah. These practices, which may have initially been intended for reverence and remembrance, transformed across generations into shirk belief, and people began attributing to these idols the qualities belonging to Allah alone.

This process shows how easily the human mind turns toward concrete and visible figures, and how it attempts to overcome the difficulty of worshipping Allah, who is abstract and exalted. But it is precisely at this point that the call of revelation intervenes: believing in Allah and turning toward Him requires establishing a direct and sincere relationship — without need for any intermediary or any mushrik structure.

The Message of Revelation: Worship Allah Alone

Our Prophet Noah held his people accountable for believing in Allah alone, and he did not deify himself or any other person. His message was exceedingly clear and resolute: "O my people! Serve Allah; you have no deity other than Him." This call is the common message of all the prophets and forms the fundamental pillar of Islam.

Islam, which maintains that revelation is a teaching encompassing everything pertaining to human life, calls people to turn toward Allah alone. This call means recognizing Allah's sovereignty in every domain of life, placing His commands at the center of life, and never regarding any person, institution, or idea as superior to revelation.

Yet the mushrikeen resisted this teaching of revelation. As seen in Surah Nuh, they defended their own idols and deities, and opposed change. This resistance stemmed not only from their attachment to the idols, but also from their fear of losing the

social, economic, and psychological benefits provided by the mushrik system.

The Mushrik Mindset: From Concepts to Persons

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the mushrikeen is their tendency to understand life and events not through a conceptual framework, but by deifying people and their qualities. This approach is the tendency to define truth not through universal principles and values, but through the authority of specific individuals.

In this mindset, what is correct is what certain people say; it is the preferences of individuals, not principles and precepts, that are determinative. This blocks critical thinking and independent reasoning. Instead of understanding the universal message of revelation, people become captive to the interpretations and practices of specific figures.

Yet revelation calls people to think, to reason, to question, and to strive to find the truth. In countless verses of the Quran, people are encouraged to use their mental faculties through questions such as: "Will you not use reason?", "Will you not reflect?", "Will you not take heed?"

The Authority of Idols in Jahiliyyah Society

In jahiliyyah societies, an idea or belief would first be submitted for the approval of the idols or of authorities occupying the position of idols. If this authority granted approval, that belief would be considered legitimate in society. The following words spoken by Pharaoh to those who believed in the call of our Prophet Moses summarize this situation clearly: "Did you believe in Him before I gave you permission?" (Surah Al-A'raf, 123)

Here Pharaoh positions himself as the absolute authority, making even the beliefs of his people contingent upon his own approval. This totalitarian approach reveals the political and sociological dimension of shirk. Mushrik practice is not merely a religious deviation — it is also a tool of social control and the struggle for power.

Because the members of jahiliyyah society have abandoned revelation, they do not know how to evaluate the thoughts and lives of deified figures according to revelation. Instead, they act through tradition, imitation, and blind conformity. This leads to the stagnation of religious thought and the obstruction of innovation and reform efforts.

Modern Mushrik Practice: New Forms of Shirk Today

Today, there exist many individuals and communities who identify as Muslim yet actually hold the beliefs and practices of jahiliyyah. This modern mushrik practice manifests itself in the form of sanctifying certain figures and rendering them beyond question. Among these deified figures are hadith imams, madhab imams, Sufi sheikhs, community leaders, jurists, exegetes, mujaddids, descendants of the Prophet (awlad al-rasul), and others like them. The views and teachings of these individuals are sometimes accepted without question — even when they are in clear contradiction with revelation — and are rendered closed to criticism.

This situation has several dangerous consequences. First, the universal and dynamic message of revelation becomes imprisoned within the interpretations of historical figures. Second, independent thinking regarding the understanding and practice of religion is blocked. Third, the spirit of critical thinking at the heart of Islam disappears, replaced by blind imitation and traditionalism.

In traditionalist circles, the thoughts, actions, and teachings of a certain person or group have become unquestionable. The views of these figures are accepted as absolute truth, and criticizing them is regarded as equivalent to leaving the religion. This attitude is contrary to the principle of tawhid, because the possessor of absolute truth and perfection is Allah alone.

The Example of Our Prophet Ibrahim: The Courage to Criticize Idols

In the Quran, our Prophet Ibrahim's courageous criticism of his own people's idols is an important example for believers. Our Prophet Ibrahim demonstrated to his father and his people the meaninglessness of worshipping their idols, and questioned their servitude to things made by their own hands that could neither benefit nor harm them. This critical stance drew the reaction of the people against him and even threatened his life. Yet our Prophet Ibrahim was willing to pay this price for the sake of truth and continued his struggle against mushrik practice. Ultimately, his steadfast stance played an important role in the spread of the tawhid belief.

Today as well, true believers should follow in the footsteps of our Prophet Ibrahim — criticizing traditional and contemporary idols and those who defend them, and advocating a return to the original message of revelation. This criticism should not be spiteful or disparaging, but constructive and rooted in the pursuit of truth.

The True Muslim's Stance: Taking Revelation as the Measure

The true Muslim can criticize every kind of personality, thought, and tradition by taking as the measure the Quran — the Book of Allah. This critical stance is not disrespect toward religion; on the contrary, it is a demonstration of devotion to the very essence of religion. Because revelation harbors no concern for sanctifying any individual; rather, it gives people the ability to distinguish right from wrong and encourages them to use that ability.

True believers evaluate historical figures, their ancestors and their deeds according to the Quran, and give voice to errors and wrongs. This evaluation does not mean denying or belittling the past; rather, it means reading history with a critical eye, drawing lessons from it, and not repeating the same mistakes.

Neither Wadd, nor Suwa, nor madhab imams, nor hadith imams, nor community leaders, nor jurists, nor exegetes, nor mujaddids, nor descendants of the Prophet, nor imams, nor any other figure can take the place of revelation or constitute an authority above it. All of these are human beings; they can err, they can be mistaken.

A Call to Transformation in the Light of Revelation

Returning to the essence of Islam and building a faith purified of mushrik practice is

the most urgent duty of Muslims today. This transformation is not only an individual effort, but also a process of societal reform. In this process, the following are of vital importance:

- Education and Awareness: Muslims must read the Quran directly, understand it, and place it at the center of their lives. They must receive religious knowledge not only from certain authorities, but directly from the sources of revelation.

- Critical Thinking: It is necessary to question traditions, interpretations, and practices according to revelation, and to develop a critical attitude. This criticism must be constructive rather than destructive, and oriented toward the search for truth.

- Strengthening Tawhid Consciousness: The oneness and majesty of Allah — the awareness that no being can be His partner — must be constantly remembered, and it must be ensured that acts of worship and way of life are shaped by this consciousness.

- Transition from Person-Centered Religion to Concept-Centered Religion: Understanding and living religion must take place not through the authority of specific individuals, but through universal values and principles.

Return to the Pure Call of Tawhid

The most fundamental message of Islam is tawhid: believing in the oneness of Allah and worshipping Him alone. This message is the common call of all the messengers and constitutes the very essence of Islam. Yet throughout history, people have fallen into shirk in various forms, deifying beings other than Allah. A similar situation exists today as well. In modern Muslim societies, certain religious figures have been idolized and rendered beyond question. This situation brings with it a departure from the original message of revelation and a rigidity in understanding and living religion.

True salvation lies in returning to the pure tawhid belief — purified of these idols. Taking the Quran — the Book of Allah — as the measure, evaluating every kind of personality, tradition, and practice with a critical eye, correcting wrongs, and finding the right path is the responsibility of believers.

Idolization has never been the correct approach — neither in the past nor today. The true believer holds that everything belongs to Allah, and keeps away from idols and the sanctification of individuals. By believing in Allah alone, one finds the right path and continues life with this faith.

This call means returning to the essence of Islam, to the pure message of revelation. And this return is the key to individual and societal salvation. May Allah protect us from shirk and grant us patience on the path of tawhid.

Data Analysis and Abjad: Prophecy or Science?

In the contemporary world, data analysis has become an indispensable element of decision-making processes across a wide spectrum — from business to healthcare, from education to public policy. Statistical inferences drawn from large datasets,

algorithmic predictions, and machine learning applications profoundly shape the functioning of modern society through their capacity to make projections about the future. At this point, however, a philosophically significant question arises: To what extent does this scientific approach of predicting the future based on historical data resemble ancient methods of prophecy?

What Is Abjad? A Historical and Methodological Examination

Abjad is a system that assigns specific numerical values to letters of the Arabic alphabet. Beyond its use as a numeral system in Arabic, it has also been employed — particularly in Sufi traditions — for symbolic and mystical interpretation. The origins of the Abjad system trace back to pre-Islamic Arab culture and even further, to civilizations that used Semitic languages. In the Abjad system, each letter carries a numeric equivalent:

- Alif = 1

- Ba = 2

- Jim = 3

- Dal = 4

- …and so on.

The historical uses of this system have occurred in various contexts. In the classical period, it served as a practical tool for recording dates (tarikh düşürme), keeping chronological records, and performing mathematical calculations. Over time, however — especially in certain Sufi circles — attempts were made to extract hidden meanings and make predictions about future events by calculating the Abjad values of Quranic verses and words. Some commentators claimed that the Abjad values of certain words corresponded to historical events and made prophecies about events they believed would occur in the future. This approach sparked serious debate among Islamic scholars and was generally criticized for implying claims to knowledge of the unseen (ghayb).

The methodological problem with Abjad calculation is its openness to the interpreter's subjectivity. There are no objective criteria for which words to select, which values to sum, or how to interpret the results. This removes the system from scientific methods and shifts it into a mystical realm.

Data Analysis: Epistemological Foundations and Methodology

Data analysis is a scientific discipline that systematically examines observable phenomena, uncovers the relationships between them, and makes probabilistic projections about future states based on those relationships. Modern data analysis rests on solid foundations such as mathematical statistics, probability theory, and computer science. The core components of data analysis are:

1. Data Collection and Quality Control: The first step in the analytical process is collecting reliable and representative data. Sampling methods, measurement errors,

and data quality are of critical importance here.

2. Statistical Modeling: Mathematical models are constructed on the collected data. These models seek to define and explain the relationships between variables.

3. Hypothesis Testing: The models and assumptions formed are verified or rejected through statistical tests. This process is grounded in the testability principle of the scientific method.

4. Prediction and Forecasting: Probabilistic predictions about future states are made based on patterns found in historical data. These predictions are expressed with a certain confidence interval and margin of error.

The epistemological strength of data analysis derives from its properties of reproducibility and verifiability. When an analysis is repeated by different researchers using the same data and methods, it should yield similar results; predictions made can be tested in the future and their success rates can be measured. However, data analysis also has its limits. Due to the assumptions underlying the models used, noise in the data, unmeasurable variables, and the nature of complex systems, predictions always contain uncertainty. For this reason, data analysis results express probability, not certainty.

Similarities: The Common Ground of the Drive to Predict

At a surface level, Abjad and data analysis share some fundamental similarities:

1. Starting from Existing Knowledge: Both methods attempt to draw inferences about unknown or future situations by departing from existing knowledge or data. Abjad uses the numerical values of words in texts; data analysis uses past observations.

2. A Systematic Approach: Both are systematic approaches based on specific rules and procedures. Abjad has letter-to-number conversion rules; data analysis has statistical methodologies.

3. Uncertainty and Interpretation: Both methods produce outputs open to interpretation rather than definitive conclusions. While the meaning of Abjad calculations depends on the interpreter, data analysis results also require context and interpretation.

4. Use in Decision-Making Processes: Historically, both methods have been used to influence human decision-making. Whereas Abjad was seen in certain eras as a guide to future events, data analysis is used today for strategy formulation and planning.

Yet these surface-level similarities do not obscure the deep methodological and epistemological differences between the two approaches.

Critical Differences: The Distinction Between Science and Mysticism

The fundamental differences between Abjad and data analysis are precisely those elements that distinguish scientific method from mystical approaches:

1. Methodological Transparency and Objectivity:

Data analysis relies on transparent and reproducible procedures. The methods used can be explained in detail, reviewed by others, and the same results can be obtained from the same data. This is a foundational principle of the scientific method. Abjad, on the other hand, depends on the interpreter's subjective preferences. There are no objective criteria for which words to include in a calculation or how to interpret the results. Different people working on the same text can arrive at entirely different conclusions.

2. Verifiability and Testability:

The results of data analysis are testable. Once a predictive model is constructed, its success can be measured against future observations. If the model is wrong, it is corrected or rejected. This is the fundamental mechanism of scientific progress. There is no systematic method for testing the accuracy of Abjad calculations. The interpretations made are generally applied retrospectively (retrofitting), and when predicted future events fail to materialize, no systematic revision is made.

3. Margin of Error and Expression of Uncertainty:

Modern data analysis explicitly states the level of uncertainty in every prediction. Confidence intervals, error margins, and levels of statistical significance are reported as a standard practice. This provides objective information about how reliable the predictions are. In Abjad calculations, no such measurement of uncertainty is made. Results are generally presented as definitive interpretations, without any systematic assessment of how reliable the underlying assumptions are.

4. Causality and Mechanism:

Data analysis strives, wherever possible, to understand and explain the causal relationships between variables. A prediction should be based not merely on statistical correlation but, where possible, on an intelligible mechanism. In Abjad, there is no explanation of what causal link could exist between the numerical values of letters and future events. The system operates on a symbolic and mystical basis and offers no mechanical explanation.

5. Universality and Cultural Context:

Statistical methods and data analysis techniques are universal. Scientists from different cultures speak the same language and use the same methodologies. Mathematical truths transcend cultural boundaries. Abjad, however, is specific to a particular cultural and linguistic context. It cannot be directly applied to languages that do not use the Arabic alphabet and requires different cultural interpretive traditions.

The Islamic Perspective: Knowledge of the Unseen (Ghayb) and Tawakkul

Islam explicitly emphasizes that knowledge of the unseen belongs to Allah alone. This is stated in numerous Quranic verses:

> "Indeed, Allah is the Knower of the unseen of the heavens and the earth." (Fatir, 35:38)

> "Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah." (An-Naml, 27:65)

This theological principle renders problematic any approach that claims to know the future with certainty. Divination arrows (azlam) are explicitly prohibited in Islam, and this prohibition rejects the attempt to intrude upon Allah's authority through claims to knowledge of the future:

> "O you who have believed, indeed, clouding the mind, gambling, stone altars, and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:90)

The "azlam" (divining arrows) mentioned in this verse were instruments used in the Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) to predict the future or reach a decision. By prohibiting such practices, Islam teaches that human beings should entrust their destiny to Allah's decree.

So how should this principle be applied to prediction tools such as data analysis and Abjad?

Abjad and Islamic Ruling:

Using Abjad calculation for the purposes of recording dates, chronological calculation, or mathematics is not problematic. However, claiming knowledge of the unseen on the basis of Abjad calculations — asserting that one definitively knows future events — is unacceptable from an Islamic standpoint. Classical Islamic scholars approached such practices with caution. Thinkers such as Imam al-Ghazali, in defining the limits of knowledge, drew attention to the dangers of venturing into the realm of the unseen. There is broad scholarly consensus (ijma) among Islamic jurists that prophecy claims based on Abjad calculations are contrary to the fundamental principles of Islam.

Data Analysis and Islamic Evaluation:

Data analysis must be assessed in a different position from Abjad. Data analysis examines observable phenomena and makes probabilistic predictions; it does not claim definitive knowledge of the unseen. In this respect, it can be considered legitimate from an Islamic perspective. Islam encourages the use of reason, learning from experience, and planning ahead. What matters here is that predictions be understood to express probability rather than certainty, and that the final outcome be left to Allah's decree. However, placing excessive trust in data analysis, presenting results as absolute truth, or viewing these tools as determinative of Allah's will is problematic. From an Islamic perspective, data analysis:

1. Should be used as a decision-support tool, not as an absolute determinant.

2. Should have its uncertainty and margin of error clearly expressed.

3. Should preserve the principle of *tawakkul*: a person plans to the best of their ability, but leaves the outcome to Allah.

4. Should remain within ethical boundaries: it must not be used to harm people or reinforce injustice.

The Pragmatic Dimension: The Correct Use of Predictive Tools

Beyond the theoretical discussion, a practical question arises: How should we use predictive tools such as data analysis?

1. A Culture of Probabilistic Thinking:

The predictions offered by data analysis express probability. Saying "There is an 85% probability that this customer will repay their loan" is very different from saying "This customer will definitely repay." Developing a culture of probabilistic thinking among society and decision-makers is important.

2. Knowing the Limits of Models:

Every statistical model rests on certain assumptions. The saying "All models are wrong, but some are useful" reminds us that models are approximate representations of reality. Knowing the limits of models is the key to using them correctly.

3. Ethical Use:

Data analysis can either reinforce or reduce social inequalities. For example, biases embedded in historical data can be reflected in algorithmic decision-making systems. For this reason, the ethical use of data analysis is critical.

4. Transparency and Accountability:

Particularly in public policy or decisions that affect people's lives, the results of data analysis must be transparent and accountable. The defense of "the algorithm said so" is not sufficient.

Knowledge, Wisdom, and Humility

The comparison between Abjad and data analysis raises profound questions about the nature and limits of human knowledge. Both methods represent the endeavor to know the future, yet their epistemological foundations and methodologies differ fundamentally.

Abjad is a symbolic and mystical system. Although it may have acquired meaning in certain historical and cultural contexts, it does not meet the criteria of the scientific method. When it carries claims to definitive knowledge of the future, it is problematic both epistemologically and — from an Islamic perspective — as a claim to knowledge of the unseen.

Data analysis, by contrast, is a product of the scientific method. It is grounded in a methodology that is measurable, testable, and correctable. Yet data analysis too

offers probabilistic, not certain, knowledge. Used within these limits, it can make valuable contributions to decision-making processes.

From an Islamic perspective, using scientific tools such as data analysis is not only permissible but encouraged. However, one must not place absolute trust in the results of these tools, nor base one's fate entirely on their predictions. The principle of tawakkul must be preserved: a person plans by using their intellect and scientific methods, but leaves the ultimate outcome to Allah's decree.

Acknowledging that human knowledge is limited is an expression of epistemological humility — a humility that forms the foundation of both scientific integrity and religious submission. In the modern world, preserving this humility while benefiting from the power of data analysis is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity.

The future is known only when it is lived. Our duty is to prepare with the best tools available to us — while never forgetting that the ultimate truth rests in the hands of Allah.

The Wisdom and Responsibility of Having Children in Islam

Islam, as in every area of life, brings deep wisdom and understanding to the matter of having children. This subject is not merely a biological process or a social expectation — it is a responsibility shaped by the consciousness of servitude to Allah, extending into the hereafter, and aimed at preserving the belief in Tawhid. The lives of the Messengers and their reasons for seeking children offer the most beautiful examples for Muslims in this regard.

The Prayers of the Messengers for Offspring: Examples of Pure Intention

The Prayer of our Prophet Ibrahim

Our Prophet Ibrahim, in his old age, turned to Allah and asked for a righteous child. This prayer is conveyed in the Quran as follows:

> "My Lord! Grant me a child from among the righteous." (As-Saffat, 100)

What is striking in this prayer is that our Prophet Ibrahim, when asking for a child, first and foremost requested a righteous offspring. There is no intention here of numerical increase, continuation of lineage, or gaining worldly power. His intention was to raise a generation that would carry the banner of Tawhid after him and keep the religion of Allah alive.

The Prayer of Messenger Zakariyya

Messenger Zakariyya similarly, in his old age and despite his wife being barren, asked Allah for a child. The expression "pure offspring" in Messenger Zakariyya's prayer reflects not merely the desire for a physically healthy child, but for one with a sound creed, upright character, and sincere devotion to Allah. His concern was the protection and spread of the religion after him. This shows that the Messengers' reasons for seeking children were entirely rooted in the lofty interests of Islam. For them, a child was a trust that would protect the religion of Allah and convey it to

future generations.

The Place of Children in Islam: Blessing and Responsibility

In Islam, a child is a great blessing granted by Allah. However, this blessing also brings with it a heavy responsibility. Having children:

1. Is a means of gratitude to Allah: Offspring are among the special favors Allah bestows upon His servants.

2. Is a means of trial: A child is a test through which the parents' devotion to Allah and their belief in Tawhid are examined.

3. Is a trust extending into the hereafter: The upbringing of a child is among the matters for which one will be held accountable in the hereafter.

Allah the Almighty says:

> "Indeed, your wealth and your children are a trial, and Allah — with Him is a great reward." (At-Taghabun, 15)

This verse clearly states that children are a means of trial. What truly matters is to succeed in this trial and to raise children within the consciousness of Tawhid, without associating partners with Allah.

The Understanding of Children in the Age of Jahiliyyah and Today

The Distortions of the Jahiliyyah Mindset

In the age of Jahiliyyah, the reasons for having children generally stemmed from the following:

- Continuation of lineage and tribal power: Male children were desired to increase the tribe's strength and numerical superiority in battles, while female children were seen as a burden.

- Economic interest: Children were valued as a future labor force that would contribute economically to the family.

- Social status: Having many children was a sign of prestige and power in society.

Islam rejects all of these understandings. The Quran strongly condemns the practice of burying female children alive during the Jahiliyyah period:

> "And when the girl buried alive is asked — for what sin was she killed?" (At-Takwir, 8–9)

The Distorted Understandings of Children Today

Similar distortions continue today in different forms:

1. Social Pressure and Normalized Expectations

Many people view having children as a social obligation. Questions such as "When are you going to have children?", "Will you have only one child?", or "Won't you have a son?" show how intense this social pressure is. Yet having children is a decision that requires a sense of responsibility toward Allah and sincere intention — not the fulfillment of social expectations.

2. The Goal of Numerical Superiority

Some communities encourage having children in order to increase the population of certain ethnic or sectarian groups. This understanding contradicts the spirit of Islam. Because in Islam, what matters is not numerical majority, but raising a generation of quality, possessed of faith and sound character.

3. Economic and Practical Concerns

Today, some people have children to ensure they will have someone to care for them in old age. This intention means seeing the child as a means rather than an end in itself — which is contrary to the Islamic understanding.

4. The Idolization of the Child

Perhaps the greatest distortion is placing the child at the center of life and substituting them for Allah. This is explicitly criticized in Surah Al-A'raf:

> "He created you from a single soul, and from it He made its mate so that he might find rest in her. And when he covered her, she carried a light burden and moved about with it. But when she grew heavy, they both called upon Allah, their Lord: 'If You give us a righteous child, we will surely be among the grateful.' But when He gave them a righteous child, they associated partners with Him in what He had given them. Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him." (Al-A'raf, 189–190)

These verses describe how people idolize their children and place them in a position more important than Allah.

The Idolization of the Child: Hidden Shirk

The belief in Tawhid requires that no being other than Allah be placed in His position. Yet today, many parents — without realizing it — damage their belief in Tawhid by placing their children at the center of their lives.

Signs of the Idolization of the Child

1. Sacrificing Everything for the Child

Some parents may abandon prayer, acts of worship, and even earning lawful income for the sake of their children. The child's wishes and comfort take precedence over the commands of Allah.

2. Placing the Child's Future Above Everything

For the sake of the child's worldly success — schooling, career, money — families may disregard what is halal and haram. Actions such as taking riba-based loans,

earning through forbidden means, and lying are justified "for the child's future."

3. Excessive Attachment to the Child and Grief That Turns to Rebellion at Their Death

The grief of parents who lose a child is natural. However, if this grief turns into rebellion against Allah, objection to His decree, and a complete abandonment of life, it points to a serious problem with Tawhid.

4. The Desire to Raise the Child in One's Own Image

Some parents try to raise their child not as Allah desires, but according to their own wishes and dreams. The effort to fully control the child's personality, career choices, and lifestyle reflects the delusion of viewing the child as a being created for oneself.

The Sobering Picture in Surah Al-Ma'arij

Allah the Almighty describes the condition of people on the Day of Judgment as follows:

> "And no close friend will ask about a friend — they will be shown to one another. The criminal will wish he could ransom himself from the punishment of that Day by his children, his wife, his brother, and his nearest kindred who sheltered him, and everyone on earth — so that it could save him." (Al-Ma'arij, 10–14)

These verses lay bare the true condition in the hereafter of a person who sacrificed everything for their child in this world and placed them at the center of life. When that Day comes, the parent who loved their child more than themselves in this world will be willing to hand even their child over to the fire of Hell in order to save themselves. This sobering picture shows how the wrong priorities of worldly life will turn into immense regret in the hereafter. Love for a child is lawful and beautiful — but this love must never surpass the love of Allah, and no shirk must ever be committed in its name.

The Islamic Responsibility of Raising Children

Islam views having children as a responsibility and defines the boundaries of that responsibility clearly.

The Core Responsibilities of Parents

1. Instilling the Belief in Tawhid

First and foremost, the child must be taught the oneness of Allah, that there is no deity but Him, and that worship is due to Him alone.

2. Providing Education in Worship and Character

The child must be taught Islamic values such as prayer, fasting, honesty, trustworthiness, and kindness to parents — and the parent must first demonstrate these values through their own life.

3. Providing Lawful Sustenance

It is important that the child's body not be nourished with forbidden income, for the healthy development of their soul and character.

4. Providing a Righteous Environment

The social environment in which the child exists plays a critical role in their development. Parents are responsible for raising their child in an environment where Islamic values can be learned and lived.

The Balance Between Number of Children and Responsibility

Islam has not commanded a specific number of children. However, the following principles are important:

1. Have as Many Children as You Can Properly Raise

If parents are not in a position to provide the necessary religious and moral upbringing for their children, it is more appropriate to have a number of children they can properly raise rather than many.

2. The Principle of Justice

Dealing justly among children is one of the fundamental principles of Islam.

3. The Responsibility of Provision

Having children requires providing them with lawful and wholesome sustenance. Being unable to fulfill this responsibility is something to be taken into account when planning the number of children.

The Deviations of the Modern World Regarding Children

1. The Ideologization of Childlessness

Today, some ideological movements portray having children as "an unnecessary burden," "an obstacle to career," or "harmful to the environment." This understanding is completely contrary to Islam's concept of fitra (natural disposition).

2. Excessive Consumption and the Culture of Display

Some families harm their children by spoiling them excessively, giving them everything they desire, and instilling habits of luxury consumption. The values of contentment, gratitude, and humility that Islam teaches are under threat as children risk becoming lost in a materialistic culture.

3. The Dangers of the Digital Age

Today, children are exposed to the harmful effects of the internet, social media, and digital content. The responsibility of parents to protect their children from these dangers is growing ever greater.

The Matter of Children from the Perspective of the Hereafter

Islam addresses every subject within the balance of this world and the hereafter. The matter of children is an important part of this balance.

The Place of Children in the Trial of This World

Children are a means through which parents' devotion to Allah is tested. If a child leads one away from obeying Allah's commands and requires disobedience to Him, then there is failure in this trial.

The Accountability of Parents in the Hereafter

On the Day of Judgment, parents will be held responsible for the upbringing of their children. If they failed to teach their child the belief in Tawhid, did not instill a consciousness of halal and haram, and could not transmit Islamic values, they will be held accountable for this.

The Path to Raising Righteous Offspring

1. First, Reform Yourself

The most valuable thing a parent can give their child is to show Islam through their own conduct. A child is influenced far more by the example they witness in practice than by theoretical knowledge.

2. Make Du'a

The prayers the Messengers made for their children are the most beautiful examples in this regard. Every parent should continuously make du'a for their child's guidance, righteousness, and that they become a virtuous servant of Allah.

Our Prophet Ibrahim's prayer:

> "My Lord! Make me and my descendants people who establish prayer. Our Lord, accept my supplication." (Ibrahim, 40)

3. Teach Knowledge

Teaching the child the Quran and good character will be their greatest provision on their journey through this world and the next.

4. Show Compassion and Mercy

5. Be Just and Consistent

Not treating the child unjustly, keeping promises, and maintaining a consistent attitude are important for the healthy development of the child's character.

Faithfulness to the Trust

Having children is a sacred trust in Islam. This trust is among the greatest blessings Allah has bestowed upon His servants, yet it is also among the heaviest responsibilities. As we see in the example of the Messengers, the true purpose of having children is to raise a righteous generation that will carry the belief in Tawhid to

future generations — one that lives Islam and keeps it alive. Without this consciousness, having children based solely on Jahiliyyah standards — numerical superiority, continuation of lineage, social status — is not in accordance with the Islamic understanding.

Today, the idolization of the child, placing them at the center of life, and committing shirk by associating them with Allah is a serious problem of Tawhid. While loving their children, parents must know the boundaries of that love, raise them as Allah has commanded, and never commit shirk against Him.

From the perspective of the hereafter, children are a means of trial. Those who live in this world with wrong priorities — placing the child at the center of life — will experience immense regret on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, no one will be of any benefit to another; everyone will be occupied with their own deeds.

For this reason, Muslims must act with the following consciousness when having children:

1. The intention must be for the pleasure of Allah: A child should be sought with the intention of raising a generation that will keep the religion of Allah alive.

2. The responsibility of upbringing must not be forgotten: Bringing a child into the world is not enough — raising them with the consciousness of Tawhid and Islamic character is essential.

3. The child must not be idolized: Love for a child is lawful and beautiful, but this love must never surpass the love of Allah.

4. The balance between this world and the hereafter must be maintained: The child's worldly success matters, but their journey to the hereafter matters more.

5. Patience and du'a must not be neglected: Raising a child is a long and arduous path. On this path, one must exercise patience and ceaselessly make du'a to Allah.

May Allah grant us the ability to see our children as a trust, to raise them upon Islamic character, to be patient and steadfast on this path, never to deviate into Jahiliyyah understandings, and to discipline them within the consciousness of Tawhid — without idolizing them and without committing shirk against Him.

The Limits of Obedience to Parents: The Quran's Balanced Approach

Islam is a religion built on balance and justice in every aspect of life. One of the most delicate examples of this balance manifests in the relationship between responsibilities toward parents and devotion to Allah. Today, we frequently observe in religious discourse that absolute obedience to parents is emphasized, yet the Sharia-defined limits of this obedience are rarely explained sufficiently. However, the Quran presents an extremely clear and balanced framework on this matter.

The Quran's Balance on Obedience to Parents

The Foundation of Kindness and Respect

The Quran emphasizes our responsibilities toward parents in many verses. Particularly in Surah Al-Isra, verses 23-24, this responsibility is expressed as follows:

> "Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor."

In Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 8, it is similarly stated:

> "We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents."

These verses clearly demonstrate that respect, kindness, and compassion toward parents are among the fundamental cornerstones of Islamic morality. When one considers the hardships parents endure in raising children and their material and spiritual sacrifices, it becomes clear how justified and appropriate this emphasis is.

The Limit of Obedience: The Principle of Tawhid

However, the Quran also declares with equal clarity that this responsibility toward parents is not absolute but is subject to specific conditions. Surah Luqman, verse 15, establishes Islam's fundamental principle on this matter:

> "But if they strive to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in this world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me in repentance. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do."

This verse shapes Islam's approach to obedience to parents around three fundamental principles:

1. An absolute boundary regarding shirk: If parents compel their children to associate partners with Allah or to engage in any behavior contrary to the belief in tawhid, they are not to be obeyed in this matter. This demonstrates that the principle of tawhid stands above all else.

2. The continuation of worldly kindness: Even when obedience is withheld, kindness toward parents in worldly life must continue. That is, disobedience must not transform into ill-treatment or disrespect.

3. The priority of accountability in the Hereafter: The expression "follow the way of those who turn back to Me" emphasizes that man's ultimate purpose is devotion to Allah, and no compromise can be made on this matter.

Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 8, also supports the same principle:

> "We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents."

Absolute Obedience Belongs to Allah Alone

These verses demonstrate that in Islam, absolute obedience belongs to Allah alone. This means that when parents or any other authority demand something contrary to Allah's commands, the required response is not compliance but refusal. Such a

stance is not disobedience — on the contrary, it is the mark of the highest moral standing.

The Problem of Incomplete Conveyance in Our Time

The Consequences of One-Sided Emphasis

Unfortunately, in contemporary religious outreach activities — particularly in Friday sermons and lectures — the subject of obedience to parents is generally addressed in a one-sided manner. While the importance of kindness, respect, and obedience to parents is frequently emphasized, the ruling of "do not obey them" found in Surah Luqman and Surah Al-Ankabut is rarely articulated. This approach distorts the Quran's balanced message and gives rise to several serious problems:

1. An incomplete understanding of the religion: People may come to believe that obedience to parents is absolute and that complying with their wishes — even when contrary to Allah's pleasure — is the correct course of action.

2. A conflict of conscience: Devout young people may feel as though they are committing a sin when they refuse their parents' demands that contradict Islam.

3. Formalistic religiosity: When the wholeness of the Quran is overlooked, people may gravitate toward a form of religiosity that conforms merely to social norms without grasping the spirit of Islam.

The Danger of Believing in Only Part of the Book

Allah condemns this attitude sharply in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 85:

> "Do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

This verse emphasizes that the message of the Quran must be understood and conveyed in its entirety. Omitting the verses that define the limits of obedience to parents falls within the scope of this warning. The responsibility of religious institutions and scholars engaged in da'wah is to present the full message of the Quran in a balanced manner. While emphasizing kindness to parents, they must simultaneously and explicitly state that devotion to Allah stands above all else.

The Spiritual Responsibilities of Parents in the Modern Age

The Prioritization of Worldly Goals

Today, many parents raise their children with worldly success as the primary aim. Academic achievement, prestigious universities, high-paying professions, and material prosperity have become the principal goals presented to children. Yet the Quran states man's purpose of creation plainly:

> "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to serve Me." (Surah Adh-Dhariyat,

56)

According to this verse, man's true purpose is to worship Allah. Worldly successes and material gains, while legitimate and valuable, can never be the ultimate goal. The foremost responsibility of parents is to teach their children this fundamental truth and to prepare them for devotion to Allah.

The Neglect of Spiritual Education

Unfortunately, in many households, teaching children the Quran from a young age, instilling in them the discipline of prayer, and imparting Islamic morality are neglected. Instead, children are directed from morning to evening toward studying, attending courses, and passing examinations. This situation reveals that parents are failing to fulfill their spiritual responsibilities. The rights that parents hold over their children — the greatest of all people's rights over them — are not confined merely to meeting worldly needs. On the contrary, setting the child's journey toward the Hereafter on the right course is the greatest responsibility.

Taking a Stance Against Misguidence

If parents are openly driving their child toward a path contrary to Allah's commands, or preventing them from fulfilling their religious obligations, it is the Quranic injunction for the child not to obey their parents in this regard.

For example:

- If parents oppose their daughter wearing hijab and forbid it,

- If they prevent their child from performing prayer or mock them for it,

- If they compel their child into a forbidden occupation, profession, or relationship,

- If they prevent their child from receiving religious education, learning the Quran, or living an Islamic life —

In these situations, the child's respectful but resolute rejection of these parental demands is not disobedience — it is obedience to Allah.

The Distinction Between Disobedience and Ill-Treatment

The expression "accompany them in this world with appropriate kindness" in Surah Luqman, verse 15, is extremely significant. This expression demonstrates that even in situations where obedience is withheld, ill-treatment of parents is not permissible.

The Balanced Approach

The balanced approach prescribed by the Quran may be summarized as follows:

Situations in which obedience is not given:

- Being compelled to commit shirk

- Being compelled to do what Allah has made forbidden

- Being made to abandon what Allah has made obligatory

- Being explicitly incited to sin

Areas in which kindness must be maintained:

- Meeting material needs

- Showing emotional support and love

- Providing care during illness and old age

- Gentle speech and conduct

- Respect and reverence

This balanced approach ensures both the preservation of devotion to Allah and the fulfillment of responsibility toward parents.

Exemplary Figures

Examples demonstrating this balance exist throughout Islamic history. Our Prophet Ibrahim conveyed the message of tawhid to his mushrik father, yet even when his father rejected it, he continued to treat him with respect and departed saying, "Peace be upon you." (Surah Maryam, 47)

Criticism of "Lukewarm Islam"

The Dangers of Superficial Religiosity

The approach known today as "lukewarm Islam" refers to an understanding that accepts the easy and comfortable aspects of Islam while ignoring its demanding and self-sacrificing rulings. The signs of this approach include:

- Emphasizing only the ritual dimension of the religion while neglecting its moral and social dimensions

- Stretching Sharia rulings according to circumstances

- Trivializing commands with phrases such as "intention is what matters" or "Allah is forgiving"

- Placing emphasis on only the comforting verses of the Quran rather than its entirety

We observe a similar approach regarding obedience to parents. By ignoring the verses that define the limits of obedience, only the emphasis on "kindness to parents" is put forward — and this leads to an incomplete understanding of the religion.

A True Understanding of Islam

A true understanding of Islam requires accepting all of the Quran's commands in a balanced manner and putting them into practice. This necessitates accepting in their

entirety both the easy and the difficult, both what we favor and what we dislike. Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

> "O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 208)

"Entering completely" means not being selective — not accepting some of the Quran's rulings while rejecting others.

The Responsibility of Religious Institutions

The Necessity of Balanced Conveyance

The most fundamental responsibility of all institutions engaged in religious outreach — foremost among them the Directorate of Religious Affairs — is to convey the Quran's message to the public completely and in a balanced manner. Balanced conveyance on the subject of obedience to parents must include the following elements:

1. Emphasizing kindness: The importance of respect, kindness, and service to parents must be frequently reminded.

2. Explaining the limits: At the same time, it must be clearly stated that obedience is not to be rendered in situations contrary to Allah's commands.

3. Spiritual responsibility: The responsibilities of parents in their children's religious education must be emphasized.

4. Practical examples: In addition to theoretical knowledge, people must be guided through practical situations and concrete examples.

Balance in Friday Sermons

When the subject of obedience to parents is addressed in Friday sermons, Surah Luqman verse 15 must invariably be cited and explained. People must learn both kindness to parents and the limits of obedience together. Otherwise, a mistaken conviction spreads among the public that "parents must be obeyed under all circumstances" — and this leads both to a misunderstanding of the religion and to individual conflicts of conscience.

Conclusion

The Quran presents an extremely balanced and wise framework on the subject of obedience to parents. According to this framework:

1. Kindness and respect toward parents is foundational: Islam commands the finest conduct toward parents and mentions it immediately after devotion to Allah.

2. Obedience has limits: When parents compel their child to commit shirk or to engage in any behavior contrary to Allah's commands, obedience is not to be rendered in such matters.

3. Disobedience does not mean ill-treatment: Even in situations where obedience is

withheld, kindness toward parents in worldly life must continue.

4. Devotion to Allah stands above all else: Since man is first and foremost Allah's servant, no human authority can take Allah's place.

5. Parents also have responsibilities: Parents must not be content merely with directing their children toward worldly goals; they must teach them Islam and prepare them for the journey to the Hereafter.

6. Incomplete conveyance is unacceptable: The Quran's message must be conveyed in its entirety — some verses must not be emphasized while others are concealed.

Religious institutions and individuals engaged in da'wah today must convey this balanced message to the public without omission. Clearly stating the limits of obedience to parents does not confuse people — on the contrary, it shows them a clear path and puts their conscience at ease.

It must never be forgotten that refusing to obey parents for the sake of Allah's pleasure is the mark of the highest moral standing. For it proves that one's bond with Allah stands above all else.

In conclusion, living a life of respect, love, and kindness toward parents — while at the same time refusing to obey them when necessary for the sake of Allah's pleasure — is an indispensable part of Islamic morality. This balance is a reflection of the justice and wisdom the Quran offers, and it must be properly understood and lived by every Muslim.

Respect for Parents, the Wisdom of Having Children, and True Freedom: A Qur'anic Perspective

The 23rd and 24th verses of Surah Al-Isra in the Qur'an lay out the proper conduct toward parents in such refined language that these words have continued to touch the conscience of humanity for centuries. Allah does not merely say "show respect" — He prohibits even the smallest violation of it. The word "uff" is the briefest expression of weariness in our language. A sigh, a slight frown, a tone that hardens just a little... All of these fall within the scope of this prohibition. The fact that Allah draws the boundary of prohibition at this smallest possible point is profoundly significant: respect is not a technical obligation imposed from the outside, but a heartfelt refinement that comes from within. As the language of the verse progresses, the depth of its commands increases. The expression "do not scold them" covers not only verbal but also behavioral forms of rudeness. The command "speak to them a noble word" is emphasized especially in old age, for that period is the most fragile stage for both the body and the emotions. Perhaps the most powerful image in the verse is this: "Spread over them the wing of humility out of mercy." This expression describes a biological role reversal. The parents who once sheltered the child beneath their wings are now the ones in need of shelter — and now it is the child who must spread those wings. Yet the nuance here is critical: this protection is to be offered not with arrogance, but with mercy. It is not the strong looking down upon the weak; rather, it is acting with a moral memory, with the

consciousness of honoring the debt of the past. The final command of the verse is perhaps the most deeply moving of all: "My Lord! Have mercy upon them as they raised me when I was small." The child does not attempt to repay the efforts of the parents directly, for that debt cannot be repaid. Instead, he entrusts that labor to Allah, to the greatest Mercy. This is the most mature form of gratitude.

The Bar of Patience: The Pinnacle of Self-Discipline

The fact that the verses employ such precise language points to how profound a degree of self-discipline the subject demands. At first glance, not saying "uff" may seem simple. But not feeling impatience inwardly, not letting weariness show on one's face, not slamming doors, not raising one's voice, not wearing a sullen expression — sustaining all of these together requires a person to genuinely confront themselves. The special emphasis on old age is not coincidental. Old age is a period in which irritability, forgetfulness, and physical and emotional fragility increase. Parents may be harsh toward their child without justification; they may project the exhaustions of the past onto the relationship of today. And yet, on the child's side, there is still no "uff." This asymmetry is a deliberate moral choice. For in childhood, the parents also lived an asymmetry: they cared without expecting anything, with unconditional love. Now, faithfulness is not about reversing that asymmetry — it is about consciously continuing that same unconscious generosity. While the modern world prescribes "take care of yourself, cut off relationships that exhaust you," the Qur'an speaks an entirely different language. It does not recommend severing the relationship, but sustaining it in a moral form. Patience here appears not as passive submission, but as an active, conscious, and heartfelt choice. Yet here too there is a balance: what the Qur'an proposes is not enduring at the cost of self-annihilation, but being able to set boundaries while preserving one's ethics.

The Wisdom of Having Children: The Prayers of the Messengers and the Measures of Jahiliyyah

Alongside the profound message of Surah Al-Isra, the Qur'an does not treat the matter of having children as merely a biological or social phenomenon. The prayer of Messenger Ibrahim — "My Lord! Grant me a righteous son" (As-Saffat, 100) — and the supplication of Messenger Zakariyya in his old age stand as examples in this regard. In desiring children, neither sought the continuation of lineage, numerical superiority, or worldly advantage; both intended to raise a righteous generation that would carry the banner of tawhid. This defines the true measure of having children: a child is both a blessing and a grave trust. Yet today, the reasons billions of people have children do not align with this measure. Social pressure, anxiety over the continuation of lineage, the calculation of finding a caretaker in old age, or sheer personal desire — these are precisely what the Qur'an characterizes as the measures of the Jahiliyyah mindset. Verses 189 and 190 of Surah Al-A'raf approach this matter from a striking angle: after a couple is granted a healthy child, their turning to associate partners with Allah instead of giving thanks lays bare how a child can become an object of idolization. An understanding that places the child at the center of life, sacrifices everything for the child, and elevates the child above Allah unknowingly causes harm to the belief in tawhid. Verses 10 through 14 of Surah Al-Ma'arij depict the

consequences of this error in the Hereafter with a sense of horror: on the Day of Resurrection, those who in this world sacrificed everything for their children will wish to sacrifice even their own children for their own salvation. This is the tragic outcome of misplaced priorities. True love is not to idolize the child, but to see the child as a trust from Allah and to bear the responsibility of raising that child upon tawhid. As Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 56, reminds us, the purpose of man's creation is servitude to Allah. This purpose does not change in child-rearing — on the contrary, it deepens further.

The Limits of Obedience: The Equation of Surah Luqman

Alongside the verses commanding kindness and respect toward parents, the Qur'an also draws the boundaries of this relationship with great clarity. Verse 15 of Surah Luqman establishes this balance with a foundational statement: if parents compel a person toward mushrik conduct — associating partners with Allah — or toward behavior contrary to Allah's commands, they are not to be obeyed. Yet conducting oneself well with them in the world is still commanded. That is, disobedience does not become a license for disrespect; noble speech and moral conduct continue nonetheless. But when Allah's pleasure is at stake, that pleasure takes precedence over every form of human authority. This balance is frequently overlooked in religious communication. Friday sermons emphasize the importance of treating parents well, yet the ruling in Surah Luqman — "do not obey them" — is rarely voiced. This one-sided transmission aligns with the situation warned against in verse 85 of Surah Al-Baqarah: believing in one part of the Book while disregarding the rest. The selective presentation of verses prepares the ground for a shallow and formalistic understanding of religiosity to take root in people. This understanding — known among the public as "lukewarm Islam" — leads to the proliferation of individuals who have failed to grasp the true moral vision of the Qur'an. Today, many parents raise their children not with Islamic values but solely with a mentality focused on academic success, career, and material gain. This constitutes a neglect of spiritual responsibility. As Surah Adh-Dhariyat declares, man was created for servitude to Allah alone. If a parent is leading a child away from this path, then the child's resistance to such misguided teachings — out of regard for Allah's pleasure — is a morally sound stance in accordance with the Qur'an.

True Freedom: From the Slavery of the Nafs to Submission to Allah

Behind all these matters lies a more fundamental problem: how the modern person, while imagining himself to be free, actually establishes a form of slavery to his own nafs and to the approval of others. Verse 43 of Surah Al-Furqan lays this bare with a striking question: "Have you seen the one who has taken his own desire as his god?" When a person makes his desires and passions the purpose of his life — endlessly pursuing higher status, greater fame, more approval — he has made those desires his deity. Verse 157 of Surah Âl-i Imran reminds us of the worthlessness of everything accumulated in this world when measured against a life lived in accordance with Allah's pleasure. Climbing career ladders, being applauded, winning society's admiration — all of this fades with death and leaves no trace behind. But a small act of goodness done in the way of Allah is an investment for eternal life in the Hereafter.

The example in verse 29 of Surah Az-Zumar makes this reality even clearer: the contrast between a complicated man owned by many quarreling partners and a serene man bound to a single master alone. Whenever a person places servitude to Allah alone at the center of his life, he is freed from being a slave to his nafs, to his desires, and to the approval of others. True freedom lies within this submission.

Mercy, Trust, and Submission

This vast moral framework — beginning with the command of Surah Al-Isra that prohibits even saying "uff" to parents — finds its full meaning within a broad coherence that extends to the wisdom of having children, the limits of obedience, and liberation from the slavery of the nafs. Mercy and patience toward parents is not merely a duty, but a moral memory that carries the consciousness of honoring the debt of the past. Having children is not a biological or social necessity, but a responsibility to raise a generation that will carry the belief of tawhid. And obedience is neither absolute nor unconditional; it reaches its limit at every point where it surpasses Allah's pleasure. And at the root of all of this lies the following truth: man was created not for the approval of others, for career titles, or for material accumulation — but solely for servitude to Allah. The person who lives this servitude sincerely and from the heart spreads the wing of mercy over his parents, sees his child as a trust, and — freed from the deceptive promises of the nafs — attains true freedom. "Have you seen the one who has taken his own desire as his god?" — this question awaits us to ask it of ourselves anew at every moment. Our answer determines the direction of our lives.

Marriage in the Light of Revelation

The Historical and Social Context

Throughout the historical journey of human societies, the institution of marriage has always occupied a central place. Marriage, one of the cornerstones of social order, stands not merely as a matter of individual preference, but at a critical intersection where cultural codes, moral values, and religious understandings converge. In Turkish society as well, the understanding of marriage has been shaped as a synthesis of Islam's revelation-centered teachings and Anatolia's layered cultural heritage. However, which element predominates in this synthesis, which values take priority, and most importantly, how audible the voice of revelation is — these are questions that must be examined. In recent years, debates over "arranged marriage by matchmakers" have brought this tension to the surface. Singer Yıldız Tilbe's statement — "The man a woman chooses by her own thinking generally doesn't turn out right. Marrying through the matchmaker method is the most beautiful way" — while voicing an understanding held by a segment of society, simultaneously invites deep questioning. Is this statement truly in harmony with the spirit of Islam? Does revelation envision that a person delegates one of their most vital decisions to others? Or does it call the human being to decide through their own free will, guided by divine guidance?

Looking vs. Seeing: A Qur'anic Distinction

The Qur'an draws one of the most fundamental distinctions shaping human perception between looking (نظر - nazar) and seeing (رأى - ru'yat / بصر - basar). This distinction relates not only to visual perception but also deeply to the capacity to comprehend truth. In Surah Al-A'raf, verse 198, this distinction is expressed strikingly:

> "And if you call them to guidance, they do not hear; and you see them looking at you, but they do not see."

In this verse, it is emphasized that the mushrikeen looked at the Prophet Muhammad, yet in reality could not see. The eye is open, the retina is functional, but the spirit is absent. Here the chasm between looking and seeing reveals itself. Looking is a bodily act; seeing is a spiritual perception. If a person is devoid of spirit, if their heart is sealed, no matter how wide they open their eyes, they cannot see the truth. This condition is expressed in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 7:

> "Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil."

So how does this distinction relate to the matter of marriage? In matchmaker-arranged marriages, persons authorized by the family or community look at the prospective spouses. They examine physical features, assess social status, attempt to determine financial standing. But can this looking truly see that person's inner world, depth of faith, moral character, and most importantly their worth before Allah? In traditional arranged marriage, one looks with the eye, but cannot see with the spirit. The focus falls on external criteria, while inner truth escapes notice.

The Divine Purpose of Marriage: Sakinah, Mawaddah, and Rahmah

When the Qur'an defines the institution of marriage, it emphasizes three fundamental concepts: Sakinah (tranquility/repose), mawaddah (deep love), and rahmah (compassion/mercy). In Surah Ar-Rum, verse 21, this triad is expressed as follows:

> "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

This verse presents the theological and psychological dimensions of marriage together. The phrase "from yourselves" emphasizes that spouses come from the same essence of creation — they are not strangers to one another, but familiar. The word "find tranquility" shows that marriage is a spiritual harbor, a source of peace and serenity. "Affection and mercy" form the emotional foundation of this union.

Yet how much are these three divine aims considered in traditional arranged marriages? Regrettably, the criteria that tend to come to the fore in such marriages are as follows:

1. Physical Appearance and Body Measurements: The practice known as "bathhouse x-raying" involves observing a woman's physical characteristics — by taking her to a bathhouse or by other means — on behalf of the groom's family. This practice reduces the woman to an object and completely disregards the spiritual dimension

of marriage.

2. Financial Standing: The man's "wallet size," the family's social status and economic power are determining factors in matchmaker-arranged marriages. Despite Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, declaring that the measure of worth before Allah is taqwa, material values are foregrounded.

3. Lineage and Clan: The mentality of "take not the girl but her family" causes the family one belongs to be valued above the individual's own worth. This approach contradicts Islam's individualist structure, which holds every person accountable by their own deeds.

4. Protection from Neighborhood Gossip: Marriage decisions are often shaped by the question "What will the neighborhood say?" The approval of people is sought ahead of the approval of Allah.

None of these criteria align with the divine purposes expressed in Surah Ar-Rum. Sakinah, mawaddah and rahmah cannot be tied to bodily measurements, material wealth, or lineage. They are possible only through spiritual harmony, moral sharing, and a partnership of faith.

Age, Experience, and Knowledge: The Teaching of the Prophet Ibrahim

In traditional societies, old age is automatically associated with wisdom and sound judgment. Expressions such as "Our elders did it this way," "My grandfather said so," and "My mother is experienced — she knows" rest on the assumption that age is directly proportional to knowledge and wisdom. However, the Qur'an questions this assumption. In Surah Maryam, verse 43, the address of the Prophet Ibrahim to his father is recounted:

> "O my father, indeed there has come to me of knowledge that which has not come to you, so follow me; I will guide you to an even path."

What is striking in this verse is that the young Ibrahim offers guidance to his father — older and more experienced than himself — by virtue of the revelation-based knowledge he possesses. The father holds a respected position in his mushrik society, being an elderly and seasoned man. Yet he is devoid of revelation. Ibrahim, by contrast, is young but has been graced with Allah's revelation. And this revelation, despite all the accumulated age and experience, makes Ibrahim the representative of truth in the face of his father.

The fundamental lessons drawn from this verse are:

1. Age Alone Is Not Virtue: Old age may bring worldly experience, but if that experience lacks divine knowledge, it does not lead the person to truth. In fact, in some cases, having ingrained wrong habits and values of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) may, with age, harden into a more entrenched deviation.

2. Knowledge Comes from Revelation: The knowledge that leads to truth originates from Allah's revelation. Human experiences and social traditions gain meaning only

when evaluated in the light of revelation.

3. The Young Can Also Be Right: Islam is not a religion of the status quo. A young believer's correct knowledge rooted in revelation is superior to the revelation-distant experience of an older person.

Viewed from this perspective, the understanding in matchmaker-arranged marriages that "the elders know best, they decide" must be questioned. If those elders are not nourished by revelation, if their decisions are shaped by jahiliyyah values, they cannot show the young the right path. On the contrary, they may lead them astray from Allah's path.

Will and Consent in Marriage

Islam does not leave marriage to the decision of families or society. It is individual-centered. The woman and the man must see each other, come to know each other, and decide through their free will. In the time of the Prophet Muhammad families could serve as intermediaries and offer advice, but the right of final decision always belonged to the individuals.

Marriage as Cause-Brotherhood: The Understanding of Rabbaniyyun

In the Qur'an, the word rabbani is used for those who dedicate themselves entirely to Allah, live by His revelation, and call others to Him. To be rabbani is not merely to possess knowledge, but to act upon that knowledge, to live it, and to teach it. For the believer, then, marriage is a brotherhood in cause on this rabbani journey.

The Cause Dimension of Marriage: In Islam, marriage is not merely the union of two individuals but the shoulder-to-shoulder walking of two believing siblings on the path of Allah. Spouses must, beyond providing each other worldly comfort, strengthen one another's faith, cooperate in performing righteous deeds, and present a united stance in servitude to Allah. Spouses are responsible not only to each other but also for the advancement of the family they will form on the path of servitude to Allah. This is possible only with a consciousness of cause, a rabbani understanding.

How Is the Rabbaniyyun Spouse Chosen? If the purpose of marriage is so lofty, then spouse selection must be in that direction. It is unthinkable for a believer to choose a spouse by "bathhouse x-ray" or wallet calculations. Instead, the following questions must be asked:

- Is this person conscious of their responsibility before Allah?

- Do they fulfill their acts of worship; is their character revelation-centered?

- Can they strike a balance between this world and the hereafter?

- Can we walk together on the path of Allah?

- Will this person be a help to me in my worldly life and in my hereafter?

These are the genuine questions a believer must ask when selecting a spouse.

The Conflict of Traditional Practices with Revelation

Some traditional marriage practices are directly contrary to the spirit of Islam and the teachings of revelation. Let us examine these practices one by one:

1. Bathhouse Culture and Body Fetishism

A tradition continuing since the Ottoman period: the girl is observed at the bathhouse, her physical characteristics are examined in detail, and her bodily features are reported. This practice reduces the woman to a commodity, an object to be inspected. Islam commands modesty of gaze toward women and men alike. Bathhouse culture is in clear contradiction to this divine command. Moreover, subjecting a woman's body to assessment without her consent tramples upon her personality and dignity.

2. Forced Marriage and Deprivation of Freedom

In some traditional communities, especially girls are married off without their consent, sometimes before they have reached the age of maturity. This is contrary to the clear rulings of Islamic law. In a religion where forcibly inheriting from others is forbidden, it is unthinkable for forced marriage to be permissible. Islam has granted women many legal rights: owning property, inheriting, demanding financial support, and the right to divorce. But her most fundamental right is her free will over her own life.

3. Practices Containing Shirk: Amulets, Evil Eye Charms, Fortune-Telling

Many elements of shirk enter traditional marriage processes:

- Fortune-tellers are visited to determine whether the marriage will be "auspicious"

- Amulets are written, evil eye charms are worn

- "Fate-opening" prayers and spells are performed

- It is believed that certain days are auspicious or inauspicious

All of these are examples of shirk that undermine tawakkul and seek refuge in powers other than Allah. In Surah At-Tawbah, verse 28:

> "O you who have believed, indeed the mushrikeen are unclean."

Even in the most important decision of life such as marriage, resorting to shirk is incompatible with the essence of faith.

4. Neighborhood Pressure and the Anxiety of "What Will Society Say?"

In traditional societies, individuals often make decisions based on what society will think. The questions "What will the neighborhood say?" and "What will the relatives think?" come before the pleasure of Allah. However, the Qur'an awakens the believer with this warning (Surah Al-A'raf, verse 3):

> "Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow other than Him as allies."

In the decision of marriage as well, it is Allah's revelation — not the pressure of society or family — that must be the guide. Of course, valuing the family's opinion and consulting with them is praiseworthy. But to regard the family or society more than Allah is shirk.

What Should a Revelation-Centered Marriage Look Like?

Thus far we have addressed the conflict of traditional practices with revelation. So what should a revelation-centered understanding of marriage look like? Here are the fundamental principles:

1. The Right to Know and Be Known

Islam permits those who are to marry to get to know each other. The woman must see the man she is to marry, be able to speak with him, and learn about his religion, his morality, and his worldview. The man likewise must come to know the woman. In matchmaker-arranged marriages, the engaged couple sometimes never see each other until the marriage contract. They meet at home after the nikah. This can lead to both psychological trauma and incompatibility. Islam does not envision such a risk.

2. Consultation, Not Imposition

Families may advise their children and suggest persons they consider suitable. But it must be consultation, not imposition. In Surah Ash-Shura, verse 38:

> "And whose affair is consultation among themselves."

Consultation means thinking together and exchanging ideas. Imposition is forcing one party's decision upon another.

3. The Criterion of Taqwa

The most important criterion is the person's sense of responsibility before Allah. In Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13:

> "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."

In spouse selection as well, this must be the primary criterion. A person's wealth, position, and beauty are secondary factors. What is essential is fear of Allah, conscientiousness in worship, and moral uprightness.

4. Equality and Balance

Islam addresses the woman and the man equally. In marriage too, the woman is not a silent, will-less party. Both the man and the woman have the right to speak. Women and men are equal. This understanding of equality must also be observed in the pre-marriage process.

5. Humility and Tawakkul in Allah

When seeking a spouse, there must not be arrogance, pride, or excessive selectiveness — but humility and trust in Allah. By the principle of belief in destiny, a person's spouse has been decreed by Allah. But this does not mean remaining passive. It requires actively searching, getting to know, and in the process of deciding, praying to Allah and placing trust in Him.

Leaving Behind the Matchmakers' Gaze and Holding Fast to Allah

In traditional societies, "matchmakers" play an important role. But what they see is only the surface. What Allah sees, however, are the hearts. If Allah looks at hearts, then we too, in a decision as vital as marriage, must look at hearts — focusing not on external appearances but on the inner world. And this is possible only under the guidance of revelation.

In conclusion, the matchmaker-arranged marriage understanding is problematic to the extent that it strays from the essence of revelation. Elements such as bathhouse culture, forced marriage, practices containing shirk, and neighborhood pressure are contrary to the spirit of Islam. A revelation-centered understanding of marriage, by contrast, rests upon free will, the right to know one another, the criterion of taqwa, consultation, and trust in Allah.

Let us recall Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 56 once more:

> "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

Turning toward this divine purpose in every area of life — including marriage — leads the human being to true peace. When choosing our spouse, let our guide be not "What will the neighborhood say?" but "What does Allah command?" Let us look not with the eyes of matchmakers, but with the light of revelation. Only thus can we attain the sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah promised in Surah Ar-Rum.

May Allah make us His rabbani servants, unite us with rabbani spouses, and make our marriages a brotherhood in cause on the path of servitude to Him.

The Heart's Loss of Direction

The human soul has wrestled with the same question throughout every era of history: Why does loving hurt so much? Why does the attachment felt toward another person sometimes open wounds deep enough to shake the very center of one's life? These questions have occupied poets, philosophers, and thinkers for centuries. Yet when the matter is approached from a spiritual perspective, the true reason behind the pain of love lies far deeper — hidden within the very existential structure of the human being.

The Heart's Purpose in Creation and Its Misdirection

The human being is, by nature, a creature that needs to love and to attach itself to things. This need is a natural characteristic of the heart and forms an inseparable part of human fitra (innate nature). However, the direction and quality of this love is the fundamental factor that determines a person's peace or restlessness. The heart,

much like a compass, guides its owner toward tranquility when pointed in the right direction — and drives them toward the edge of a cliff when turned the wrong way. For the modern person, in the process of modernity and secularization, the love of Allah has been replaced by the love of human beings, and spiritual devotion has given way to worldly relationships. Though this transformation may appear innocent on the surface, it is a dangerous shift that unsettles the heart's balance and leaves it in a state of perpetual chaos.

Shirk: The Hidden Wound in the Heart

In Islamic terminology, shirk means associating partners with Allah and is considered one of the gravest sins. However, shirk is not limited to worshipping an idol or devoting oneself to a being other than Allah. Shirk also manifests in subtler, more widespread forms. Known as shirk al-khafi (hidden shirk), this condition refers to a person directing their love, devotion, fear, and hope toward anyone other than Allah. Placing a human being at the center of one's life, loading them with absolute meaning, and expecting everything from them — this is a modern manifestation of that hidden shirk.

When a beloved, a friend, a spouse, or a child becomes the sole focal point of the heart, a place that belongs to Allah has been usurped. And that usurpation returns to the heart directly as pain.

In the Quran, this state is described through a striking parable. In Surah Al-Hajj (22:31), Allah says: "Turn to Allah alone, without associating partners with Him. Whoever associates partners with Allah is like one who has fallen from the sky and is snatched by birds, or swept away by the wind to a distant place."

This verse perfectly depicts the state of a person who has strayed from tawhid (the oneness of Allah). One who has fallen from the sky, been seized by the talons of birds, or hurled about by the wind has lost all control. They neither know where they are going nor have any ground beneath them when they stop. And this is precisely the condition of the one whose heart has become bound to someone other than Allah: they are tossed from one relationship to the next, rolling from one disappointment to another, experiencing the same emptiness each time.

The Deceptive Promise of Romanticism

Perhaps one of the greatest deceptions of the modern age is the promise that romantic love will bring absolute happiness. Films, novels, songs, and social media ceaselessly deliver a single message: "When you find the right person, your life will be complete." This narrative has been etched into the minds of millions and has shaped their expectations. Yet behind this promise lies a dangerous lie. Because no human being can complete another. No created being can fill the void that Allah has left within the heart.

Every person is a traveler burdened with their own shortcomings, weaknesses, and limitations. To expect everything from one person is equivalent to deifying them — and that expectation will inevitably turn into disappointment.

The phrase "I cannot live without you" has become almost a cliché in our time. People say it easily, part ways after a while, and then say the very same words to someone else. This is not merely a devaluation of words — it is a sign of how bewildered hearts have become. A person does not cling to someone because they truly cannot survive alone, but because they are trying to fill the Allah-shaped void within their heart. Yet since that person is also a created being, they can never fill that void.

The one who is abandoned, having believed these hollow words, is shattered. They come to see themselves as worthless, inadequate, and condemned to be left. But the problem is not within them — it is the wrong meaning they have loaded upon their heart. A person who seeks their worth in another's love will feel as though they have lost their worth the moment that love disappears. Yet the truth is this: a person's worth lies in their creation, in their standing before Allah — not in the value that others assign to them.

The Language of Pain: The Heart's Rebellion

So why is the pain of love so searing? Why does the end of a relationship affect a person for days, months, sometimes even years? Medical explanations speak of changes in brain chemistry — falling dopamine and oxytocin levels, rising cortisol. These are accurate, but they are not sufficient.

From a spiritual perspective, the pain of love is in truth a rebellion of the soul. The soul is rejecting the wrong mission placed upon it; it is protesting against serving something other than Allah. This pain is not a punishment — it is a warning. Just as the body signals danger through physical pain, the soul, through this pain, says to its owner: "You have turned in the wrong direction — come, turn back to the right one."

The constriction within the pain of love is the natural consequence of the heart moving away from Allah and becoming bound to created beings. Because the heart has been assigned a mission incompatible with its fitra, it becomes trapped, overwhelmed, and pained.

At this point, a natural question arises: "Then is it wrong to love? Does Islam prohibit love between people?" Absolutely not. Islam does not forbid love — on the contrary, it teaches how to channel it to the right place. The problem is not in loving itself, but in the nature and direction of that love.

Tawhidic Love: Loving for the Sake of Allah

In Islam, love is reshaped through the principle of tawhid. That is, all forms of love must originate from the love of Allah and return to Him. This is not to negate love, but to invest it with meaning and worth.

A person loves their spouse for the sake of Allah — because that spouse is a blessing from Allah, a manifestation of His beautiful names. They love their children for the sake of Allah, they love their friends for the sake of Allah. This phrase "loving for the sake of Allah" does not mean making love abstract or stripping it of emotion. On the contrary, it adds profound depth to love. For now that love is no longer a

fleeting feeling or a relationship of self-interest — it is a means of drawing nearer to Allah, a path toward earning His pleasure.

In this perspective, the person we love is no longer the center of our life, but a part of it. The center is always Allah. Therefore, when that person departs, disappears, or causes disappointment, the heart is not destroyed — because the heart's true support, its true pillar, still stands.

Loving for the sake of Allah sanctifies love and gives it worth. The one loved for the sake of Allah is no longer an idol, but a brother, a friend, a companion on the road.

Being Left and the Perception of Self

Being left is one of the most difficult experiences a person can go through. Because being left is not simply the end of a relationship — it is a blow struck against one's sense of self. The sentence "They left me" almost immediately transforms in the mind into: "I was not enough. I was not worthy of being loved."

Yet there is a fundamental error here. Being left does not prove that a person is without worth. On the contrary, in some cases it is a mercy; in others, a test. A person's worth does not lie in the value another person assigns to them — it lies in their standing before Allah.

The one who has been left, if they have grounded their sense of self in Allah, will emerge from this experience stronger. A heart that can say "Allah is sufficient for me" no longer fears being abandoned, nor does it stand in need of others' approval. For it is drawing its worth from the truest of sources.

The Dialectic of Emptiness and Fullness

The human heart exists in a constant dialectic of emptiness and fullness. A heart that tries to fill itself with created beings empties again each time — because no created being can fill the heart completely. But a heart filled with the love of Allah never empties, because Allah is infinite and eternal.

Yunus Emre says: "We love the created, for the sake of the Creator." This line perfectly captures the tawhidic dimension of love. Loving created things is beautiful, but that love must lead toward the Creator — not away from Him.

The void within the heart is a subject that modern psychology also frequently addresses. Viktor Frankl, in his work Man's Search for Meaning, argues that the fundamental need of the human being is meaning. From an Islamic perspective, that meaning is knowing Allah and worshipping Him. A life without Allah is a life devoid of meaning, and that absence is reflected in the heart as emptiness.

The Solution: Rebuilding the Heart

So how is this emptiness within the heart filled? How does one recover from the pain of love?

The solution requires a practice that is simple yet profound: returning to Allah.

Returning to Allah is not merely performing acts of worship. Prayer, reciting the Quran, and dhikr (remembrance of Allah) are, of course, important. But the true return is to change the direction of the heart — to turn it away from the created and toward the Creator. To direct one's expectations, hopes, fears, and loves toward Allah.

When this return takes place, a tremendous transformation occurs in life. People are no longer the center of life — they are its periphery. Those we love are trusts that Allah has placed in our care, and we regard them through that lens. We are grateful for their presence and patient in their absence. Because our heart is bound not to them, but to Allah.

A heart turned toward Allah no longer becomes a leaf hurled about by the wind. It is like a tree whose roots run deep. Storms may blow, leaves may fall, branches may sway — but the tree does not topple. Because its roots are set in solid ground.

The Path to Peace: Tawhid and Tawakkul

The two foundational pillars of the heart's peace are tawhid and tawakkul. Tawhid is to acknowledge the oneness of Allah and to associate nothing with Him. Tawakkul is to entrust all things to Him, and to view outcomes through the lens of His decree.

Tawhid liberates the heart. It is no longer crushed beneath the shadow of another person, nor overwhelmed by the uncertainty of a relationship. Tawakkul, in turn, gives the heart rest. A heart that says "All things are in Allah's hands" is freed from the anxiety of needing to control and from living in a state of expectation.

The Heart's Return Home

The pain of love is an experience the modern person frequently endures. But behind this pain lies a deeper truth. When a human being places a created being in Allah's stead, the heart rebels and suffers. This pain is not a punishment — it is a warning. A warning that says: "You have turned in the wrong direction — come, turn back to the right one."

The solution is not to stop loving, but to channel love to the right place. Loving for the sake of Allah sanctifies love and gives it meaning. A heart turned toward Allah no longer fears being abandoned, nor stands in need of another's approval — for it draws its worth from the truest of sources.

Rise from where you have fallen, and hold fast to Allah. Then you will neither fall to the ground nor be swept by the wind into an unknown corner. Salvation lies in turning toward Allah and taking refuge in Him. In this way, a person finds peace and happiness both in this world and in the next. When you fill the emptiness in your heart with the love of Allah, your life gains meaning and you attain true happiness. For the heart finds peace only when it has found its true owner — and the true owner of the heart is Allah, who created it.

Being a Slave to Desires: The Hidden Bondage of the Modern Age

There are two fundamental tendencies in human nature: a longing for eternity and a

search for meaning. The modern world, however, attempts to silence these two deep needs with temporary satisfactions. Climbing career ladders, gaining social status, achieving material prosperity, collecting likes on social media... All of these are presented to us as "success." But can these successes fill the void in the depths of the soul? Or what value do the things attained in this world hold in the face of eternity?

The Anatomy of Illusion: The Myth of Success

Contemporary society offers us a particular success scenario: Get a good education, land a prestigious job, climb the career ladder quickly, earn the admiration of society, accumulate material wealth. This formula is presented as if it were a guaranteed recipe for happiness. Yet the millions of people walking this path eventually find themselves in a state of deep dissatisfaction. Why? Because these goals never end. When one step is climbed, the next appears. When one gain is achieved, a larger one becomes tempting. Within this cycle, a person constantly lives for "the next thing" but never gets to taste the peace of "now."

In verse 157 of Surah Āl-i İmrān, Allah says: "And if you are killed in the cause of Allah or die — then forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than whatever they accumulate." This verse reminds us of a fundamental truth: No matter how much we accumulate in this world, no matter how much we gather, none of it can reach the worth of Allah's mercy. Material gain, career, fame... These all end with death. But even the smallest good deed done for Allah is carried into eternity.

Making Desire One's God: Contemporary Mushrik Tendencies

The question in verse 43 of Surah Al-Furqān is striking: "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him?" This verse puts its finger on the deepest ailment of modern man. The contemporary person, who at first glance considers himself free and thinks he bows to no authority, is in fact in the most rigid form of bondage: the bondage of his ego and desires.

How does this bondage work? When a person places his desires at the center of his life and makes satisfying them the purpose of his existence, he has in fact deified those desires. More money, a higher position, more followers, a more luxurious life... The emptiness inside never fills, and every gain provides only temporary satisfaction.

So why does this cycle never end? Because the ego is a well that knows no satiation. The more you give it, the more it demands. If you become famous, you want to be more famous. If you become rich, you want to be richer. When one goal is achieved, it loses its meaning and a new goal is set. This endless race exhausts people, wears them down, and ultimately leaves them unhappy.

The Approval of Others: Invisible Chains

Another form of bondage for modern man is living for the praise and approval of others. The age of social media has deepened this problem further. People now assign value to themselves based on how many likes their posts receive, how positive the comments are, and whether their follower count is growing.

In verse 29 of Surah Az-Zumar, Allah gives the following parable: "Allah presents an example: a man being argued over by partners in disagreement, and another man belonging exclusively to one man — are they equal in comparison?" This verse points to a profound truth: Can the situation of a slave serving many masters be the same as that of a slave serving only one?

The person who lives for the approval of others becomes trapped between constantly conflicting expectations. He tries to please everyone but can fully please no one. What he does to gain one group's approval causes another group's criticism. In the end, he forgets how to be himself and constantly takes shape according to others' expectations. This leads to a deep identity crisis.

Yet true freedom is to live by seeking only Allah's pleasure. The applause of people is fleeting — today's admirers forget tomorrow. What is appreciated today is criticized tomorrow. But Allah's pleasure is permanent, unchanging, extending into eternity.

Beyond Transience: Leaving a Lasting Mark

Consider someone who lived fifty years ago — someone who was at the peak of their career, held a respected place in society, and was materially wealthy. How many people remember that person's name today? What significance do their career achievements hold now? The wealth they accumulated, the titles they earned, the awards they received... Which of these carries any meaning today?

This reality shows us: No matter how brilliant worldly successes may appear, they are temporary — they are forgotten and fade away. But good deeds done for Allah are different. A meal offered to an orphan, charity given to the poor, knowledge shared, a kind word, a prayer... These are deeds that are invisible yet recorded in eternity.

Leaving a lasting mark does not pass through fame or social status. A lasting mark comes from living in accordance with Allah's pleasure and acting for His sake. Because this is the true purpose of our existence in this world: to worship Allah and to earn His pleasure.

The Paradox of Freedom: Finding Liberation Through Submission

The modern world defines freedom for us as follows: Do what you want, be bound by no rules, answer to no one. But this understanding does not liberate a person — on the contrary, it drags them into a deeper bondage. Because a person who recognizes no rule submits to the rules of his ego and desires.

True freedom, paradoxically, comes through submission: submission to Allah. When a person gives up being a slave to his ego and to the approval of others, and decides to live by seeking only Allah's pleasure — that is when he truly becomes free.

This submission is the key to peace for the human soul. Because there is no longer a need to constantly run, constantly try to please others, constantly strive to obtain more. The only thing required is to walk on the straight path that Allah has determined. This path is clear, plain, and tranquil.

Questioning: What Are We Enslaved To?

The question "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?" requires each of us to look back at our own lives. What is the first thing that comes to our mind when we wake up in the morning? What do we think about most during the day — our career, our material gain, our social status, or Allah's pleasure?

By what criteria do we make our decisions? Do we ask questions like "What will this earn me?", "What will people say?", "How will this contribute to my career?" — or do we ask "Is this in accordance with Allah's pleasure?", "Will this benefit me in the afterlife?"?

What do we spend our time on? Is our priority spending hours on social media, constantly chasing more gain, trying to increase our social visibility? Or is it worship, knowledge, doing good, and drawing closer to Allah?

These questions may be uncomfortable because they confront us with reality. But this confrontation is essential. Because knowing what we are enslaved to determines the meaning and direction of our lives.

Reprioritizing: An Afterlife-Oriented Life

So what should we do? Is it forbidden to build a career, earn money, or gain a respected place in society? Of course not. Islam encourages work, production, and lawful earnings. But the problem lies here: Are these things the purpose of life, or merely its means?

An afterlife-oriented life does not mean abandoning the world. It means working, earning, and producing in this world while doing these things for Allah's pleasure and viewing them as a means of preparation for the afterlife. Earning money is not wrong, but deifying money and sacrificing everything for it is wrong. Having a career is not incorrect, but making the career the center of life and sacrificing the afterlife for it is incorrect.

Priorities must be clear: Worship, closeness to Allah, and preparation for the afterlife come first. Worldly affairs are tools that serve these. A person who lives with this perspective will find peace in this world and will depart having prepared for the afterlife.

Choosing What Is Permanent

Human life is short — an average of 70 to 80 years. Half of this passes with childhood, old age, sleep, and similar states. The truly productive time left to us is perhaps 30 to 40 years. What are we spending this short time on?

The reality of death grants us the clearest perspective. Consider: when you are on your deathbed thinking of what you leave behind, will the career steps seem important — or the good deeds you did for Allah? Will the value society assigned to you bring peace — or the possibility of having earned Allah's pleasure?

The fundamental question every person must ask themselves is this: "What am I

chasing, and will what I am chasing carry me into eternity?"

If the answer is no, perhaps it is time to reconsider.

True peace is hidden in submission to Allah. Freeing oneself from being a slave to one's ego, to the approval of others, and to the fleeting allure of the world is only possible through this submission. And only this submission can lead us to peace in this world and salvation in the afterlife.

In conclusion: Making one's god out of one's desires is the most widespread ailment of our age. Its cure is a sincere return to servitude before Allah. This return guarantees our freedom, our peace, and our eternal salvation.

Analysis of Two Mental Submissions in Light of the Principle of Tawhid

The principle of Tawhid in Islam commands that man be a servant only to Allah, and that all forms of worship, devotion, and submission be directed solely to Him. This principle forms the essence of Islam and determines the foundation of the Muslim's worldview. However, throughout Islamic history, particularly with the fabrication of Sufi traditions, certain practices have emerged that contradict this fundamental principle. Rabita is one of the most notable examples of these. On the other hand, artificial intelligence, which stands out among our era's technological developments, also carries the potential to lead to a similar error: attributing a deifying perspective to technology. Here, we will examine both rabita as a Sufi practice and extreme attitudes toward artificial intelligence from the perspective of the principle of Tawhid.

The Concept of Rabita and Its Historical Development

The Definition and Emergence of Rabita

Although rabita literally means "bond" or "connection," it has been shifted to a more specific meaning in Sufi terminology. In the Sufi tradition, rabita is a spiritual practice in which the murid (disciple) continuously visualizes his sheikh in his mind, places his image in his heart, and looks at life through the sheikh's perspective. This practice has been presented as a method claimed to aim at strengthening the murid's spiritual bond with his sheikh and thereby drawing closer to Allah. However, when early Islamic history is examined, no trace of such a practice is found during the time of our Prophet Muhammad or during the era of the Companions. When our Prophet Muhammad taught Islam, he called the ummah to be servants directly to Allah and never made his own person a special focus of worship. At the center of our Prophet Muhammad's teaching lies the principle that man directly connects with Allah, follows His commands, and seeks help only from Him.

Historical Development and Tariqa Culture

The practice of rabita began to spread in the Islamic world particularly after the 11th century, with the systematic fabrication of Sufism. In the beginning, Sufism emerged with the claim of being a path of inner purification, self-discipline, and drawing closer to Allah. At this stage, Sufism was seen as a quest for spiritual ascent compatible with the fundamental teachings of Islam. However, over time Sufism became

systematized and organized structures known as tariqas emerged. Tariqas such as the Malamiyya, Qadiriyya, and Naqshbandiyya taught their murids the practice of rabita, leading to the acceptance of this practice in Islamic society and the widespread adoption of a superstitious belief. Within these tariqas, the murid's devotion to his sheikh was presented as an indispensable part of the spiritual journey. Murids were taught to continuously think about their sheikhs, to keep their images in their hearts, and that through this they would spiritually ascend.

The Content and Application of Rabita

In the practice of rabita, the murid visualizes the sheikh's face, gaze, and posture in his mind at certain times of the day or continuously. This visualization is conceived not merely as a remembrance, but as a kind of spiritual union with the sheikh, a connection to his soul. According to the murid, keeping the sheikh's image in his heart means benefiting from the sheikh's spiritual grace and thereby being closer to Allah. However, there is a critical point here: the murid's heart and worship being directed not to Allah, but to the sheikh. This creates a clear contradiction with the fundamental teaching of Islam. In the Quran, Allah says:

> "Say: Indeed, I have been commanded to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion." (Az-Zumar, 39:11)

This verse clearly states that worship and servitude must be directed solely to Allah. Yet in the practice of rabita, the murid's heart is turned toward the sheikh, which creates a deviation at the very core of worship.

The Contradiction of Rabita with the Principle of Tawhid

The Principle of Tawhid and the Fundamental Teaching of Islam

The foundation of the religion of Islam is the belief in Tawhid. Tawhid means believing in the oneness and uniqueness of Allah, not attributing divinity to any being other than Him, worshipping only Him, and directing all feelings of submission solely to Him. The Quran emphasizes this principle in countless verses. These verses show that the relationship of servitude can only be established with Allah, and that no intermediary, means, or person can interfere in this relationship. In Islam, every Muslim, regardless of their social position, level of knowledge, or spiritual state, has the right and responsibility to directly connect with Allah.

The Risk of Shirk Created by Rabita

The practice of rabita contradicts the fundamental teachings of Islam because it is a form of worship that directs the murid's heart toward the sheikh. This practice has over time turned into a form of hidden shirk. Shirk is the greatest sin in Islam, one that is difficult to be forgiven, and it means attributing to other beings the divine attributes that belong to Allah. In the practice of rabita, the sheikh becomes the center of the murid's spiritual life. The murid's thoughts, feelings, intentions, and even acts of worship are shaped under the shadow of the sheikh. This causes the relationship of servitude to be directed toward a being other than Allah. The Quran definitively states that worship must be performed only for Allah. Yet in the practice

of rabita, the murid acts contrary to this command by directing his heart and mind toward the sheikh.

The Fallacy of Spiritual Intermediation

Proponents of rabita claim that this practice does not mean placing the sheikh in place of Allah, but that he is only seen as a means of reaching Allah. However, this defense contradicts the fundamental teaching of Islam. The Quran clearly states the unnecessariness and wrongness of turning to other beings in order to reach Allah.

> "And when My servants ask you concerning Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." (Al-Baqarah, 2:186)

These verses show that Allah is closer to His servant than any intermediary. Therefore, there is no need for the mental visualization of another person in order to reach Allah. Every Muslim can turn directly to Allah, supplicate to Him, and seek help from Him.

The Psychological Effects of Rabita

Spiritual Dependency and the Loss of Free Will

The practice of rabita carries serious risks that may negatively affect the murid's psychological and emotional health. Since this practice is based on continuously directing the murid's heart and thoughts toward the sheikh, it can over time lead to the murid becoming disconnected from his own inner world and developing an extreme dependency on the sheikh. The murid's devotion to the sheikh grows so strong over time that this devotion can turn into a form of spiritual slavery. The murid struggles to make his own decisions, begins seeking the sheikh's approval in all matters, and loses his free will. This situation contradicts the value and responsibility that Islam grants to man. Islam considers man to be a being created with reason and free will, and teaches that every individual is responsible for their own choices.

Spiritual Hypnosis and the Loss of Critical Thinking

The practice of rabita can lead the murid to feel as though he is in a state of spiritual hypnosis. The strong spiritual bond formed with the sheikh dulls the murid's capacity for critical thinking and blindly binds him to the sheikh's commands. The murid no longer accepts the Quran as a source, but begins to accept the sheikh's interpretations and teachings as the ultimate truth. This causes the murid to abandon the use of his own intellect, conscience, and intuitions. Instead of the reasoning, thinking, research, and truth-seeking effort encouraged by Islam, he becomes a slave to passive submission. The Quran, however, continuously encourages people to think and use their reason.

Inner Emptiness and Spiritual Crises

Because the practice of rabita weakens the murid's direct bond with Allah, it can over time lead to an inner emptiness and spiritual crises. The murid, unable to experience the true sense of turning to Allah, cannot find spiritual satisfaction. Although

devotion to the sheikh may provide a temporary sense of peace, this peace is artificial and unsustainable. Furthermore, in the event of the sheikh's death or the murid's separation from the sheikh, the murid may experience a serious identity crisis. Because the central figure of his spiritual life has disappeared, and the murid does not know how to stand on his own. This situation stands in contrast to the firm and stable understanding of faith that Islam teaches.

A Balanced Perspective on Artificial Intelligence and Technology

The Nature of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is one of the most important technological developments of our era. However, it is important to maintain balance in our approach to this technology. Artificial intelligence is neither a miracle nor a catastrophe; it is merely a software system trained on data, operating through algorithms, and designed to perform certain tasks. It is important to understand that artificial intelligence is not a conscious, willful entity with its own goals. It has neither the ability to evaluate the past nor to foresee the future with intuitive consciousness. It can only make statistical predictions based on the data it is given. For this reason, approaching artificial intelligence with a deifying perspective, attributing an unlimited sanctity to technology, is contrary to the understanding of Tawhid.

Creativity Belongs to Allah

According to Islamic belief, the true Creator of all things is Allah. People can make some things and produce inventions with the faculties Allah has given them, but none of these is truly "creation" in the real sense. The Quran states this truth clearly:

> "And Allah created you and what you do." (As-Saffat, 37:96)

This verse clearly declares that artificial intelligence, as well as the people who develop it and the materials and ideas they use, ultimately exist through Allah's creation. Man is merely a means; he is not the creator. Without Allah's will, no being can be created and no idea can come to fruition.

The Limitations and Errors of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence systems operate as they are programmed and are limited by the data on which they are trained. Therefore, it is inevitable that they will make mistakes. Data can be incomplete, biased, or erroneous, and this is reflected in the results produced by artificial intelligence. Moreover, artificial intelligence systems can be manipulated through methods such as "prompt injection attacks" or "jailbreaking," can be misdirected, or can be used for harmful purposes. This shows that artificial intelligence does not possess absolute power; on the contrary, it is a quite fragile and directable system. In the Quran, Allah expresses the limitedness of man and his works as follows:

> "Say: I hold not for myself the power of benefit or harm, except what Allah has willed." (Al-A'raf, 7:188)

> "Say: Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector. And upon Allah let the believers rely." (At-Tawbah, 9:51)

A Balanced Approach to Technology

Islam is not against technology and progress. On the contrary, it encourages knowledge, research, and every kind of development that benefits humanity. However, while approaching these developments, it is necessary to preserve the principle of Tawhid and not to attribute a deifying perspective to technology. All technologies, including artificial intelligence, are a product of the intellect and faculties Allah has given to man, and when used correctly, they can serve the benefit of humanity. However, it must not be forgotten that these technologies also exist within the framework of Allah's decree, and that nothing can happen without His will. The test lies in the intention and manner in which man uses these technologies.

The Similarity Between Rabita and Artificial Intelligence Manipulation

Mental Manipulation and External Intervention

There are striking similarities between rabita and the manipulation techniques applied to artificial intelligence. Both refer to external interference in the natural functioning of a system or an individual.

Prompt Injection and Rabita: A prompt injection attack on artificial intelligence involves giving harmful commands from outside to disrupt the system's normal functioning and direct it toward undesired behaviors. Similarly, rabita is a form of external intervention in the murid's thought system and conscience. The murid's own free thinking and conscientious decisions are suppressed or directed by the sheikh's continuous mental presence.

Jailbreak and Overcoming Spiritual Constraints: Jailbreaking is a technique applied to bypass the security constraints of artificial intelligence systems and make them operate beyond their designed limits. The practice of rabita similarly, by overcoming the individual's natural spiritual and psychological boundaries, forces the person to surrender their will. The murid begins to accept things that he would not accept under normal circumstances or would not believe without questioning, under the authority of the sheikh.

Mental Connection and Loss of Autonomy: In artificial intelligence, changing the system's behavior through an external command means the loss of its autonomy. In rabita, the murid's continuous mental connection with the sheikh means the erasure of his own self and the loss of his autonomy. In both cases, the system (or individual) no longer acts according to its own principles or free will, but falls under the control of an external source.

The Principle of Tawhid and Free Will

These similarities make clearer why rabita contradicts the principle of Tawhid. Islam teaches that man is a being endowed by Allah with reason and free will. These abilities are also the basis of man's responsibility. In the Quran, Allah says:

> "And indeed, Allah is not unjust to the servants." (Al-Anfal, 8:51)

Practices such as rabita, by leading the individual to surrender his intellect, conscience, and spiritual inclinations to another mortal human, weaken the direct connection with Allah. This situation carries both the loss of individual autonomy and the risk of shirk.

The Correct Spiritual Path in Islam

Direct Relationship with Allah

The spiritual path taught by Islam is based on man establishing a direct, unmediated relationship with Allah. Every Muslim, regardless of their social status, level of knowledge, or spiritual condition, can turn directly to Allah, supplicate to Him, and seek forgiveness from Him. The Quran emphasizes this truth repeatedly:

> "And when My servants ask you concerning Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." (Al-Baqarah, 2:186)

This verse shows that there is no intermediary between Allah and His servant, and that every person can reach Allah directly.

The Limits of Knowledge and Guidance

Islam encourages learning knowledge, benefiting from the learned, and receiving counsel. However, this does not mean that any person should blindly submit to another person. The learned are guides who convey the teachings of the Quran to people and show the right path, but they themselves are not objects of worship or persons with whom spiritual bonds are to be formed. Even our Prophet Muhammad constantly reminded his Companions not to excessively exalt him, for he too was a servant of Allah. This is the most beautiful example of the balanced and healthy understanding of guidance in Islam.

Self-Accountability and Spiritual Purification

Islam offers a true path of spiritual purification through concepts such as self-accountability (muhasaba), repentance (tawbah), patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), and excellence (ihsan). This path involves the person confronting themselves, seeing their mistakes, seeking forgiveness from Allah, and continuously striving to become a better person. In this process, the sole goal toward which the person's heart is oriented is Allah — no other being.

The practice of rabita is a superstitious shirk practice that did not exist in the early periods of Islam, but emerged and became systematized within Sufi traditions over time. This practice weakens the direct relationship with Allah by directing the murid's heart and mind toward the sheikh, and contradicts the principle of Tawhid. The murid's extreme devotion to the sheikh can over time lead to spiritual slavery and the loss of free will. It can also give rise to serious psychological problems such as dependency, the blunting of critical thinking, and inner emptiness.

Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, is a technology developed through the

abilities Allah has granted to man, one that can be beneficial but is limited and prone to error. Attributing a deifying perspective to artificial intelligence or viewing it as a superhuman power is contrary to the belief in Tawhid. Artificial intelligence, like everything else, is under Allah's creation and decree.

The similarities between rabita and artificial intelligence manipulation are built upon the external direction of a system or individual and the loss of autonomy in both cases. This similarity also helps us understand through a technological metaphor why rabita is problematic.

The path taught by Islam is for man to turn directly to Allah, to be His servant, to seek help from Him, and to live a life in accordance with His commands. The Quran states that every aspect of a Muslim's life must be solely for Allah. Practices such as rabita contradict this principle and therefore represent a departure from the essence of Islam. Artificial intelligence, when used correctly, can be a beneficial means, but one must not attribute a divine status to it either, and must not forget that everything is under Allah's decree.

In conclusion, both in our spiritual lives and in the face of technological developments, preserving the principle of Tawhid, being a servant only to Allah, and seeking help only from Him is the unchanging teaching of Islam. Remaining faithful to this principle is the key to happiness in both this world and the hereafter.

Astrology: A Scientific, Philosophical and Theological Evaluation

Throughout human history, the desire to know the future, understand fate, and discover one's place in the universe has given rise to various belief systems and practices. Foremost among these is astrology, a system based on the claim that the positions of celestial bodies have a determining influence on human life. However, with the development of modern science, the maturation of the academic world, and the deepening of theological perspectives, the epistemological, methodological, and ontological foundations of astrology have come under serious scrutiny.

The Position of Astrology in the Academic World

There are approximately 25,000 universities worldwide, the oldest of which has a history spanning more than nine centuries. In this deep-rooted academic tradition, millions of scientists, researchers, professors, and associate professors have pushed the boundaries of knowledge, producing countless articles and studies. The absence of astrology in this vast academic accumulation is not an accidental omission but the result of a deliberate exclusion. The fundamental reason modern universities do not recognize astrology as an interdisciplinary field is that astrology fails to meet the requirements of the scientific method. Scientific knowledge must be observable, testable, falsifiable, and reproducible. Karl Popper's falsifiability criterion requires that a theory, in order to be considered scientific, must be fallible — that is, it must have the potential to be proven wrong when tested. Astrology, however, cannot meet this criterion; its propositions are so general and vague that almost any outcome can be made compatible with them. This transforms astrology into a system of unverifiable claims rather than a scientific discipline. Another reason

astrology is not taken seriously within the academic community is its lack of methodological rigor. Scientific research requires controlled experiments, peer-review processes, tests of statistical significance, and systematic error control. Astrology, on the other hand, relies on anecdotes, selective memory, and confirmation bias. People tend to remember the moments they believe astrological predictions came true while easily forgetting the dozens of cases in which they did not. This psychological mechanism creates a false impression of success where none exists in reality.

Scientific Studies and the Failure of Astrology

There are numerous scientific studies that have tested the claims of astrology, and nearly all of them have shown that astrology's predictive power is no better than random guessing. For example, Shawn Carlson's famous double-blind experiment, published in the journal Nature in 1985, revealed that professional astrologers' success in matching personality profiles with birth charts remained at chance level. Similarly, twin studies refute the fundamental assumptions of astrology. If planetary positions at the moment of birth determined personality and destiny, twins born at virtually the same time would be expected to lead nearly identical lives. Yet in reality, significant differences in personality and life experience are observed between twins. This observation fundamentally undermines astrology's causal claims. Furthermore, astrology is historically inconsistent. Different cultures use different zodiac systems and interpretive methods. Western astrology uses the tropical zodiac while Indian astrology favors the sidereal zodiac, which can result in the assignment of different signs to the same person. If astrology were based on a genuine universal law, such cultural differences would be meaningless. This inconsistency demonstrates that astrology does not reflect an objective reality but is rather a product of cultural constructs.

Astrology as a Tool of Manipulation

Astrology functions as a system that feeds on knowledge gaps and emotional voids in society. People feel discomfort in the face of uncertainty and desire a sense of control over the future. Astrology responds to this psychological need by offering a false sense of certainty and security. From this perspective, astrology becomes a tool of cognitive and emotional manipulation. Individuals with lower levels of education or those in search of spiritual meaning become particularly susceptible to astrology's promises. Astrology provides simple explanations for complex life problems, steering people away from deep thinking and genuine inquiry. Concepts such as "Saturn return" and "Mercury retrograde" offer easy explanations for life's difficulties and prevent individuals from investigating their real causes. This dimension of manipulation has become even more pronounced as astrology has evolved into a commercial industry. Today, astrology applications, books, and consulting services constitute a market worth billions of dollars. This commercial structure impedes the critical evaluation of astrology and continuously develops marketing strategies to attract new customers.

Astrology and Islamic Theology

From the perspective of Islamic belief, astrology is even more problematic, because the claim of access to knowledge of the unseen (ghayb) contradicts the fundamental principles of Islamic creed. The Quran clearly declares that knowledge of the unseen belongs to Allah alone and that this knowledge is not shared with any created being.

The Knowledge of the Unseen and Allah's Exclusive Knowledge

Verses 25–28 of Surah Al-Jinn are unequivocally clear on this matter:

> "Say: I do not know whether that which you are promised is near, or whether my Lord will appoint for it a distant term. He is the Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His unseen to anyone. Except whom He has approved of messengers, and indeed He sends before each messenger and behind him observers, so that He may know that they have conveyed the messages of their Lord; and He has encompassed whatever is with them and has enumerated all things in number."

These verses emphasize that knowledge of the unseen belongs exclusively to Allah, and that He reveals it only to the messengers He has chosen. Verse 65 of Surah An-Naml reaffirms the same truth:

> "Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected."

This verse states that knowledge of the unseen belongs absolutely to Allah and that no being in the heavens or on earth possesses such knowledge. Astrology's claim of predicting the future through celestial bodies violates this divine exclusivity.

The Quranic Perspective on the Zodiac

The Quran does mention the zodiac constellations (*buruj*), but not in an astrological context. Verse 61 of Surah Al-Furqan states:

> "Blessed is He who has placed in the sky great stars and placed therein a [burning] lamp and luminous moon."

This verse presents the constellations as a sign of Allah's creative power, not as elements determining human destiny. The opening verse of Surah Al-Buruj similarly references the constellations as a testament to Allah's majesty. Nowhere in the Quran is it stated that celestial bodies directly influence human personality or fate.

The Understanding of Destiny and the Mushrik Dimension of Astrology

The Islamic belief in qadar (divine decree) requires accepting that everything occurs through Allah's knowledge, will, and creation. Verse 29 of Surah At-Takwir expresses this reality as follows:

> "And you do not will except that Allah wills — Lord of the worlds."

This verse shows that even human will operates within the framework of Allah's will. Astrology, however, attributes an autonomous role to planets and stars in determining fate. This amounts to associating partners with Allah's absolute

sovereignty and creative will, and falls within the category of shirk. Shirk is the gravest sin in Islam, meaning to attribute to other beings the attributes and acts that belong exclusively to Allah. By ascribing divine qualities — such as determining fate, knowing the future, and shaping human personality — to celestial bodies, astrology violates the fundamental principle of tawhid (divine unity). Those who believe in such things are committing mushrik acts — they are mushrik in their outlook.

The Jinn and Knowledge of the Unseen

Verses 8–9 of Surah Al-Jinn add an important dimension to the discussion of astrology:

> "And we have sought [to reach] the heaven but found it filled with powerful guards and burning flames. And we used to sit therein in positions for hearing, but whoever listens now will find a burning flame lying in wait for him."

These verses show that the jinn previously attempted to obtain information from the heavens, but that this path has been closed. If even the jinn — who once had access to knowledge of the unseen — can no longer reach this knowledge, then any human claim to know the unseen through birth charts or planetary movements is logically inconsistent. These verses also demonstrate that the unseen is protected and that created beings are prevented from accessing this knowledge. By claiming to circumvent this divine protection, astrology falls into both a logical and a theological contradiction.

Psychological Mechanisms and the Appeal of Astrology

To understand why astrology is so widespread, it is necessary to examine the psychological mechanisms that make it appealing. Chief among these is the Barnum Effect. The Barnum Effect is the tendency of people to accept general and vague personality descriptions as accurate and specific to themselves. Astrological interpretations typically contain general statements applicable to most people: "You are sometimes introverted, sometimes extroverted," or "You want others to like and appreciate you." Such statements apply to virtually everyone, yet the individual perceives them as messages uniquely tailored to them. Another important mechanism is confirmation bias. People tend to notice and remember information that confirms ideas they already believe. When a person reads a horoscope, they are inclined to find examples from their own life that fit the interpretation and to ignore cases that do not. This leads astrology to create a false sense of accuracy that does not exist in reality. The illusion of control is also a factor that enhances astrology's appeal. People tend to believe they have control even in situations where they do not. Astrology satisfies this need for control by providing an explanatory framework for uncertain and uncontrollable life events. Saying "I'm in my Saturn return, that's why I'm going through difficulties" is psychologically more comforting than saying "My life is out of control." Finally, the representativeness heuristic plays a role in astrology's deceptive success. When explaining the cause of an event, people gravitate toward explanations that resemble that cause.

Statistical Fallacies and Astrology

Proponents of astrology sometimes claim that "statistical evidence" exists in its favor, but such claims are methodologically flawed. First, most astrological studies do not use control groups. Second, sample sizes are generally insufficient for statistical significance. Third, the multiple comparisons problem is ignored; when enough variables are compared, it is inevitable that some correlations will appear by chance. For example, when a researcher tests 12 zodiac signs against 50 different personality traits, they make 600 separate comparisons. Statistically, some of these would be expected to yield significant results by chance alone. This, however, is not evidence of a genuine relationship but a consequence of the multiple testing problem. Scientific methodology uses methods such as the Bonferroni correction to avoid such fallacies, but astrological "research" rarely applies such statistical safeguards.

Conclusion

Astrology is a system that contains serious problems from scientific, philosophical, and theological perspectives. The academic world's refusal to include astrology among the disciplines is not the result of an anti-scientific stance but a reflection of adherence to the requirements of the scientific method. The absence of astrology in nine centuries of university tradition shows that this system is incompatible with the criteria for producing knowledge. Scientific research has consistently shown that astrology's predictive power remains at the level of chance. Twin studies, the inconsistency of zodiac systems across different cultures, and the results of controlled experiments all refute astrology's fundamental assumptions. Astrology is a system that operates through psychological mechanisms and cognitive biases, exploiting people's emotional needs in the face of uncertainty.

From the perspective of Islamic theology, astrology is even more problematic. It is one of the Quran's fundamental messages that knowledge of the unseen belongs to Allah alone and that no created being can access it. Astrology's claim of predicting the future and determining fate through celestial bodies contradicts the principle of tawhid and falls within the scope of shirk. Those who engage in or believe in astrology are behaving as mushrik — attributing to celestial bodies what belongs only to Allah. The constellations are mentioned in the Quran as signs of Allah's creative power, not as determinants of human fate. The verses in Surah Al-Jinn show that access to the unseen is closed to created beings. Since even the jinn can no longer reach this knowledge, the claim that human beings can know the unseen through astrology is a logical and theological inconsistency. Islamic scholars throughout history have taken a clear stance against astrology, emphasizing that this pursuit is contrary to both reason and divine law.

In conclusion, astrology has neither a scientific, nor a logical, nor a theological foundation. Modern humanity's turn toward this field is an indication of knowledge deficiencies, weakened critical thinking, and spiritual voids. True scientists and believing Muslims are right to refuse to take astrology seriously. Rather than believing in astrology, a healthier approach would be to cultivate scientific thinking, strengthen critical reasoning skills, and properly understand the theological concepts of tawakkul (reliance on Allah) and qadar. Humanity needs not false certainties but scientific knowledge, rational inquiry, and inner strength to cope with uncertainty.

Rather than the easy answers astrology promises, accepting the complexity of life and developing genuine tools to navigate that complexity is a more constructive path for both individual and societal progress.

Physiognomy: A Superstition and Its Conflict with the Quranic Understanding of Human Nature

Throughout human history, people have developed various methods to understand and recognize one another. One such method is physiognomy — the claim that a person's character and personality traits can be read from their external appearance and facial features. However, this approach carries serious problems from both an Islamic perspective and in light of modern scientific findings.

What Is Physiognomy?

Physiognomy comes from the Greek words "physis" (nature, character) and "gnomon" (to know, to judge), roughly meaning "reading a person's nature from their face." This view claims that a person's facial features, expressions, eyes, nose, chin, and general physical characteristics can be used to draw conclusions about their personality, character, and moral values.

Some interpretations found in the physiognomic tradition include:

- Broad forehead → sign of intelligence

- Sharp gaze → mark of determination

- Thin lips → reserved character

- Round face → gentle disposition

- Prominent chin → leadership qualities

Such assessments have been popular across various cultures throughout history, and at certain points attempts were even made to establish physiognomy as a scientific discipline.

Physiognomy's Contradiction with the Quran

1. The Claim to Knowledge of the Unseen

The most fundamental problem with physiognomy is that it approaches a claim to knowledge of the unseen (ghayb). A person's inner world, true intentions, heart, and the depths of their character belong to the realm of the unseen. The Quran is clear on this matter:

"With Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him." (Al-An'am, 6:59)

A person's true character, faith or hypocrisy, sincerity or duplicity are not things visible to the eye. They are hidden in the depths of the heart and known only by God. Making definitive judgments about a person's inner world based on their outward appearance amounts to claiming knowledge of a domain that belongs exclusively to

God.

2. The Gap Between Appearance and Reality

The Quran provides important examples showing how appearance can be deceptive. Regarding hypocrites, it states:

"And when you see them, their forms please you, and if they speak, you listen to their speech. They are as if they were pieces of wood propped up — they think every shout is against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. May God destroy them; how are they deluded?" (Al-Munafiqun, 63:4)

This verse demonstrates how deceptive outward appearance can be. Hypocrites may be physically attractive and their speech compelling, yet their inner world is entirely different. While God reveals their true nature, He emphasizes that their external appearance is misleading.

3. Contradiction with Justice and Fairness

The Islamic understanding of justice requires evaluating people not by their appearance but by their deeds. The Quran states:

"Indeed, God commands you to render trusts to their rightful owners and, when you judge between people, to judge with justice." (An-Nisa, 4:58)

The physiognomic approach, however, judges people by physical characteristics they cannot control — which runs contrary to the fundamental principle of justice. A person cannot choose their facial features, but they can choose their behavior. Islam holds people responsible for the actions they choose.

The Rejection of Physiognomy by Modern Science

Contemporary science has clearly established that physiognomy lacks any scientific foundation.

Findings from Scientific Research:

1. Lack of reliability: Studies have shown that inferring character from facial features performs no better than chance.

2. Generation of bias: Physiognomic studies reflect and reinforce existing social prejudices. For example, negative interpretations of facial structures associated with certain ethnic groups have provided fertile ground for racism and discrimination.

3. Personality psychology: Modern psychology has demonstrated that personality is a complex structure shaped by the interaction of various factors — genetics, environment, experiences, and choices. Reducing this complexity to a few physical features is not scientific.

4. Neuroplasticity: As brain and behavioral sciences have shown, people's characters and personalities can change throughout their lives. The attempt to derive a dynamic structure from fixed physical features is illogical.

Historical Harms:

Physiognomy has caused serious damage throughout history:

- Racism: In the 19th century, physiognomy became one of the foundations of so-called "scientific racism." Certain races were claimed to be "inferior" or "superior," laying the groundwork for genocides and systematic discrimination.

- Criminological errors: Criminologists such as Cesare Lombroso claimed that criminals could be identified by their physical features, leading to the stigmatization of innocent people.

- Social exclusion: People whose physical features were deemed "negative" were excluded from social life and faced restricted opportunities in employment and socialization.

The Dangers of Physiognomy

The physiognomic approach harbors several serious dangers:

1. Categorizing and Stigmatizing People

Appearance-based judgments place people into predetermined molds. This ignores the individuality and potential of each person. Someone may be labeled "untrustworthy," "weak," "dangerous," or "stupid" because of their appearance — negatively affecting their entire life.

2. Producing Prejudice and Stereotypes

Physiognomy feeds social prejudice. When certain facial structures or physical features are associated with negative character traits, all people who share those features are unjustly stigmatized. This is especially dangerous for minority groups.

3. Undermining Justice

Within legal systems, judges and jury members may be unconsciously influenced by physiognomic biases. Research has shown that defendants perceived as "looking criminal" receive harsher sentences — in direct violation of the foundational principle of justice.

4. Injustice Toward Innocent People

Making negative assumptions about a person based on physical characteristics beyond their control is among the greatest injustices that can be done to them. Islam stands firmly against all forms of oppression (zulm).

The Quranic Criterion for Evaluating People: Deeds

In Islam, the only valid criterion for evaluating a person is their deeds (amal) — their actions and behavior.

"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into

peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you." (Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

This verse clearly states that differences among people — race, color, language, appearance — are not grounds for superiority, and that true worth is measured by taqwa (God-consciousness). Taqwa is a state of the heart, known only by God. The duty of human beings is not to evaluate one another by outward signs, but to look at conduct and actions.

How Should a Sound Evaluation Be Made?

Islam offers a balanced guide for coming to know and evaluate others:

1. Time and Observation: Getting to know a person requires time, observation, and interaction. Examples in the Quran — such as Prophet Joseph testing his brothers, and Prophet Moses proving himself through his work with Prophet Shu'ayb — show that people are known through their actions.

2. Husn al-Zann (Good Faith): Islam counsels maintaining a good opinion of others. Unless we witness something negative about a person, we should not think ill of them.

3. Focus on Concrete Behavior: Islam teaches us to evaluate people according to concrete, observable behavior. A person's honesty, generosity, compassion, and fairness are qualities that manifest in their deeds.

4. Avoiding Prejudice: We must avoid any prejudice based on physical features, race, color, social status, or any other external factor.

Conclusion

Physiognomy is an invalid and harmful approach from both an Islamic and a scientific standpoint. The claim that human character and personality can be inferred from outward appearance borders on claiming knowledge of the unseen — an encroachment upon the exclusive domain of God's knowledge. As the Quran clearly shows, appearance can be deceptive; what truly matters is what lies in the heart and in one's deeds. Modern science has likewise proven that physiognomy is unreliable and generates bias and discrimination. History has demonstrated how physiognomy has been used as a tool for racism, injustice, and oppression.

The teaching of Islam is clear: people are not evaluated by their physical features, race, color, or social standing, but solely by how they fulfill their responsibilities before God — by their taqwa and their deeds. And that evaluation ultimately belongs to God alone; we can only exercise cautious judgment based on observable behavior. Our duty as Muslims is to be just, compassionate, and free of prejudice toward others — striving to know them not by their outward appearance, but by the true indicators of their character as revealed through time and action. Any definitive judgment beyond this is an intrusion into the domain of God.

Preserving the Belief in Tawhid: The Danger of Deifying the Messengers

Throughout human history, the most critical issue at the heart of religion and belief systems has been preserving the boundary between the Creator and the created. The belief in Tawhid — meaning the oneness and uniqueness of Allah — is the cornerstone of Islam in particular. However, throughout history, humanity has shown a tendency to cling to tangible figures and exalt them, in an attempt to overcome the difficulty of believing in an unseen God. The most dangerous consequence of this tendency is the transgression of the human boundaries of the messengers sent as Allah's envoys, loading them with divine or semi-divine attributes.

THE DEIFICATION OF MESSENGERS: A HISTORICAL TENDENCY

A. The Difficulty of Believing in the Unseen

One of the fundamental characteristics of human psychology is the trust placed in what is concrete and visible. Believing in an unseen God has always been challenging for the human mind. This difficulty has throughout history driven people toward placing intermediaries between themselves and Allah, and then exalting those intermediaries. The Quran expresses this as follows:

> "They serve, besides Allah, what neither harms nor benefits them, saying: These are our intercessors with Allah." (Yunus 18)

This verse reveals the fundamental logic of shirk: people, thinking they cannot reach Allah directly, place intermediaries between themselves and Him, and over time they sanctify those intermediaries.

B. The Forgetting of the Messengers' Human Nature

Allah has clearly stated that all messengers sent to humanity are human beings. This is not an incidental choice; messengers must be human so they can serve as examples, experience the difficulties people face, and thereby offer genuine guidance. Yet as communities witnessed the extraordinary qualities of the messengers, they tended to overlook their human aspects and began attributing superhuman characteristics to them.

THE DEIFICATION OF OUR PROPHET ISA IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

A. The Distortion of the Word "Lord"

The most fundamental deviation in Christian theology is the attribution of the title "Lord" to our Prophet Isa, and the subsequent interpretation of this word to mean "God." In the original Aramaic and Hebrew texts, the word "rab" carries the meanings of "master, teacher, leader" — used as an expression of respect. However, especially after the Roman Empire declared Christianity its official religion, the councils convened to deliberate on the nature of our Prophet Isa elevated him to a position equal to Allah. At councils such as the Council of Nicaea (325) and the Council of Chalcedon (451), the dogma that our Prophet Isa was "fully human, fully God" was adopted. This is a clear violation of Tawhid.

B. The Trinity's Contradiction with Tawhid

The doctrine of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — which forms one of the foundational pillars of Christian theology, holds that one God manifests in three persons. This belief is incompatible with the principle of Tawhid. Allah's essence, attributes, and acts are one; He has no part or manifestation. The Quran warns on this matter in unequivocal terms. Attributes such as creatorship, authority to forgive, and worthiness of worship — attributed to our Prophet Isa — belong exclusively to Allah. Loading these attributes onto a human being means denying Allah's uniqueness and transcendence.

C. The Doctrine of Incarnation

The belief in Christian theology that Allah was born into a human body (incarnation) is an understanding unacceptable from the standpoint of Tawhid. Allah is exalted beyond space and time; it is impossible for Him to be embodied in flesh or to carry the characteristics of created beings. Our Prophet Isa is a servant and messenger of Allah, created miraculously. His birth without a father is not evidence of his divinity, but of Allah's power of creation. The Quran explains this by drawing a comparison with Adam.

EXTREME INTERPRETATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO OUR PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

A. The Narration "Lawlaka lama khalaqtu'l-aflak"

In the Islamic world, particularly within the Sufi tradition, narrations claiming that our Prophet Muhammad is the reason for creation have become widespread. The expression "Had it not been for you, I would not have created the heavens" (Lawlaka lama khalaqtu'l-aflak), found in works such as Mawahib al-Ladunniyyah, is accepted by many as a hadith; however, it is not authentic according to hadith methodology and contradicts the Quran. This understanding places our Prophet Muhammad at the center of Allah's purpose in creation, thereby casting a shadow over the belief in Tawhid. Yet the Quran clearly states the purpose of creation:

> "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Adh-Dhariyat 56)

In this verse, the purpose of creation is defined as worship of Allah — not for any messenger or created being. To tie Allah's will to create to a human being means limiting His absolute power and will.

B. The Concept of the Nur-i Muhammadi (Muhammadan Light)

The concept of Nur-i Muhammadi, prevalent in certain Sufi circles, holds that our Prophet Muhammad is the first light Allah created and that all of creation came into existence from him. According to this understanding, the light of our Prophet Muhammad is the source of all created things, and everything in the universe derives from this light. This belief contradicts one of Islam's fundamental principles: "The Creator of all things is Allah alone." The Quran gives no place to such an understanding anywhere; on the contrary, it emphasizes that Allah created everything

from nothing and that no being shares in the act of creation.

C. The Question of Our Prophet Muhammad's Infallibility

Another extreme interpretation widespread in traditional belief is the doctrine of isma — that the messengers, and especially our Prophet Muhammad, are completely immune from sin. This belief has not remained limited to saying that messengers are protected from major sins; according to some commentators, it has gone so far as to claim they are protected even from minor sins and have never made any error at all. However, the Quran clearly shows that messengers are human beings capable of making mistakes, and that they were also put to trial. There are various verses indicating that our Prophet Muhammad was wrong in some of his decisions and was corrected by Allah. These verses show that our Prophet Muhammad was also human and capable of error. His greatness lies in his acknowledgment of mistakes and his correction of them through Allah's guidance.

THE QURAN'S WAY OF DEFINING THE MESSENGERS

A. The Messengers Are Only Conveyors and Warners

The Quran defines the role of the messengers in an extremely clear manner. They are neither creators, nor forgivers, nor beings worthy of worship. Their duty is to convey Allah's revelation to people, to warn them, and to give them glad tidings:

> "Say: I am only a human being like you. It is revealed to me that your God is only One God, so take a straight path to Him and seek His forgiveness. And woe to the mushrikeen!" (Fussilat 6)

This verse is an expression spoken by our Prophet Muhammad himself, emphasizing his humanity. He is a human being like all other human beings; the only difference is that revelation comes to him. Our Prophet Muhammad is a messenger who conveys Allah's mercy to humanity. He is not the source of mercy, but the bearer of it.

B. The Reality That Messengers Were Also Tested and Made Mistakes

The Quran narrates that the messengers were not perfect, that they too were tested, and that they at times made mistakes. These narratives are the strongest evidence against the deification of the messengers.

C. The Command Not to Differentiate Between the Messengers

In traditional belief, the tendency to regard our Prophet Muhammad as superior to other messengers is common. However, the Quran offers a balanced approach on this matter. It emphasizes that believers must have equal faith in all messengers. It is not right to exalt any one messenger above another, or to believe in one messenger while rejecting another. On the other hand, the Quran also states that Allah has given some messengers different duties and distinctions from others:

> "Those Messengers — some of them We caused to excel others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And We gave Isa, son of Maryam, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit. And if

Allah had willed, those after them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them, but they differed. Some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought. But Allah does what He wills." (Al-Baqarah 253)

This verse shows that the differences among the messengers are by Allah's decree and pertain to duty and responsibility. However, this does not call for people to create their own hierarchy of superiority among the messengers. The true worth of the messengers lies in their standing before Allah, and this is known only to Allah.

THE DANGERS OF DEIFYING THE MESSENGERS

A. The Corruption of the Belief in Tawhid

Attributing superhuman qualities to the messengers undermines the fundamental principles of the belief in Tawhid. Ascribing to messengers the attributes that belong exclusively to Allah obscures His uniqueness and absolute power. Acts such as creating, providing sustenance, forgiving, and interceding belong to Allah alone. To associate a human being as a partner in these acts in terms of power and authority is open shirk. The Quran states unequivocally that shirk will not be forgiven.

B. The Placing of Barriers Between Allah and His Servant

The excessive exaltation of the messengers prevents people from turning directly to Allah. There is no need for any intermediary between Allah and His servant. Every person can pray directly to Allah, ask help from Him, and take refuge in Him.

C. Straying from the Essence of Religion

The deification of the messengers leads to straying from the original message of religion. The fundamental message of Islam is the oneness of Allah and sincere worship of Him. The messengers are the bearers of this message, not the message itself. When excessive importance is given to the messengers, the message recedes into the background, and rituals, customs, and personality cults come to the forefront.

RETURN TO THE BELIEF IN TAWHID: SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. A Quran-Centered Faith

In order to preserve the belief in Tawhid, we must understand our religion in a Quran-centered manner. The Quran is the word of Allah and reflects His will most clearly. No narration, tradition, or interpretation that contradicts the Quran can be accepted. The Quran has defined the position of the messengers in clear terms. Remaining faithful to this definition means giving the messengers their rightful due.

B. The Importance of Critical Thinking and Questioning

Rather than following tradition blindly, everything must be passed through the filter of the Quran and reason. Muslims must not have faith without questioning and reflection.

C. Education and Awareness

Wrong beliefs and practices widespread in society can be corrected through education and awareness. The importance of Tawhid must be explained in mosques, schools, and within families, and the true positions of the messengers must be taught. It is especially important that children are raised from an early age with a correct understanding of Allah. The uniqueness of Allah, the reality that power belongs to Him alone, and the fact that no being can be made a partner with Him must form the foundation of education.

The history of humanity is filled with the struggle to preserve the belief in Tawhid. Allah called humanity to Tawhid by sending messengers, yet in time people deviated from this call and deified the envoys. The deification of our Prophet Isa in Christian theology is the most prominent example of this deviation. Unfortunately, in the Islamic world as well, tendencies to attribute excessive importance to our Prophet Muhammad and to load him with superhuman qualities are observed.

The Quran makes it unmistakably clear that the messengers are only servants and envoys of Allah. They are human beings entrusted with conveying Allah's message to people. To love them, respect them, and take them as examples is obligatory — but this must not mean deifying them or associating them as partners with Allah.

To return to the belief in Tawhid is to return to the essence of Islam. To acknowledge the oneness and uniqueness of Allah, to load no created being with divine attributes, to turn directly to Him, and to seek help from Him alone — this is what it means to be a believer. No being, including the messengers, can be made a partner with Allah. The purpose of creation is worship of Allah alone, and this truth must never be forgotten.

In conclusion, the tendency to deify the messengers reveals a weakness in humanity's faith in Allah. Believing in the unseen may be difficult, but this difficulty cannot be a justification for deviating from the belief in Tawhid. Allah has provided His servants with sufficient evidence and guidance. The messengers are the bearers of this guidance. To place them where they truly belong — neither excessively exalting them nor belittling them — is the requirement of true Islam.

Shrine Visits and Seeking Help from the Dead: A Theological, Psychological and Sociological Analysis

From the early periods of Islamic history, the matter of shrine visits and seeking help from the dead has been a subject of debate, and today it continues to occupy an important place in the daily religious practices of Muslim communities. From the Ervah Cemetery in Aksaray to the Telli Baba Shrine, from the Alihan Baba Shrine in Aydın Efeler to the tomb of Muhammed Zühdî in Nazilli, many such places are visited in hope of help and healing. These practices woven around the tombs of historical figures such as Abdul Qadir Gilani, Mahmud Hüdayi and Sheikh Hasan require evaluation from the combined perspectives of religion, psychology, sociology and neuroscience. Here we will comprehensively address why these practices constitute shirk from the standpoint of Islamic creed, the psychological origins of these beliefs

in the human mind, their mechanisms of social spread, and the psychopathological processes that create susceptibility to these practices.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK — EVALUATION OF SHRINE PRACTICES IN THE LIGHT OF THE QURAN

The Principle of Tawhid and the Dedication of Supplication to Allah Alone

The fundamental principle of Islam, tawhid, establishes that only Allah is worthy of worship and petition for help. The phrase read in every prayer in Surah Al-Fatiha — "Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in" — "You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help" — is the most concise and incisive expression of this principle. This verse is not merely a prayer text; it is a declaration of creed. It defines the addressee of worship and petition for help in a manner that leaves no room for any interpretation or intermediary. Supplication (dua) in Islamic terminology is not merely a verbal request; it is a form of worship that contains obedience, humility, consciousness of servitude and submission. This definition clearly establishes that supplication must be directed only to Allah, and that if directed to another being, the act of worship also transforms into shirk.

The Helplessness of the Dead and Their Ignorance of the Unseen

The most fundamental theological problem with shrine practice is that the dead — however righteous they may be — are treated as living beings possessed of agency. The Quran is extremely clear on this matter:

"And who is more astray than one who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware." (Surah Al-Ahqaf, verse 5)

This verse clearly informs us that the dead cannot hear supplications, cannot respond, and cannot exercise any agency in worldly affairs. Abdul Qadir Gilani too, Mahmud Hüdayi too — however virtuous they were in life — are servants, and they are helpless beings who will also give account before Allah. The authority to "cause prayers to be accepted" attributed to them after their death does not exist in Islam.

The Definition of Shirk and Its Relationship to Shrine Practice

Shirk means sharing an attribute, authority or act of worship exclusive to Allah with another being. This sharing does not always take the form of bowing before a formal idol. Going to a grave and asking the person there for help, making them an intermediary in the acceptance of one's prayer, believing that they hear and can exert influence — all of this falls into the same category. For this act attributes to the dead a quality belonging to Allah — the power to hear supplications, to respond, and to meet needs.

The Matter of Empty Graves and False Shrines

Perhaps the most striking dimension of the subject is that nameless or fabricated shrines produce the same effect as "genuine" shrines. When a piece of empty land is

given the appearance of a grave and people are told "a saint is buried here," people experience the same emotional intensity and produce similar stories of "miraculous feats" (karamat). This clearly proves that the experiences associated with the practice have no connection whatsoever to the person buried there. This finding reveals that the origin of the matter is not metaphysical, but entirely psychological mechanisms inherent to the human mind.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS — THE MIND'S MEANING-MAKING MECHANISMS

The Illusion of Causality: The Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc Fallacy

The inference "I went to the shrine, then it happened; therefore it happened because of the shrine" is a classic fallacy known in the history of logic as post hoc ergo propter hoc — "it came after, therefore it came because of it." The human mind tends to interpret temporal sequence as causal relationship. Seeking patterns to rapidly detect threats facilitates survival. However, this same mechanism also causes us to experience non-existent connections as if they were real. The relationship between a shrine visit and an outcome is temporal coincidence, not causal. A person with a chronic illness visits a shrine; a few weeks later the illness begins to ease — yet the illness was already improving in its natural course, the treatment was taking effect, or a period of remission had begun. Someone seeking work visits a shrine and shortly afterward gets a job — yet applications had been made, the interview process had been advancing. The mind bypasses all these processes and clings to a single simple explanation — "it happened because I went to the shrine."

Selective Memory and Publication Bias

Consider a hundred people who go to a shrine and make a wish. Statistically, a certain proportion of these hundred people will have their wishes come true for reasons entirely unrelated to the shrine. Five of these people will tell their story, and it will spread by word of mouth. The ninety-five cases where wishes did not come true will either be mentally excluded from the system with the reasoning "it wasn't meant to be," or will simply not be told. Because recounting a failed shrine experience is, in the cultural context, perceived both as meaningless and as a sign of weakness in one's world of belief. This selective publication pattern produces in society a perception of "prayers getting accepted" far higher than the actual success rate. It is not the actual rate but the rumor rate that grows. In the social sciences this mechanism is also defined as survivorship bias: only the stories of those who came out successfully become visible; the failures remain silent.

The Expectation Effect and the Placebo Mechanism

The person going to the shrine already carries a powerful expectation before arriving: "Something will happen here," "My prayer is stronger here." This expectation transforms the mind at several levels.

Selective attention: A mind filled with expectation magnifies even small events compatible with that expectation and codes them as signs. A slight breeze felt at the shrine, a sense of peace flowing inward, someone nearby weeping — all of these can

be rendered "meaningful."

The placebo effect: This phenomenon, well documented in medical literature, shows that belief can produce real effects on physiology. Stress decreases, cortisol drops, the immune system may strengthen, the pain threshold may change. When a person prays at a shrine with deep belief and surrender, the sense of well-being brought by the physiological relaxation they experience reinforces the subjective belief that "the prayer has been accepted."

Increase in motivation: A person who goes to the shrine in a state of hopelessness and feels "that someone has taken their hand" returns more determined and calm. This psychological transformation affects behavior; the person makes more active attempts, seeks social support, thinks in a solution-oriented manner. When the outcome comes about, they attribute the share of this behavioral change to the shrine.

Mental Spatial Coding: The Distinction Between Ordinary and "Special" Space

The human mind categorizes spaces. Home is an ordinary space; the shrine is coded as "special, meaning-laden, transcendent space." This coding produces an extremely important consequence: the same event, if experienced at home, appears ordinary; if experienced at the shrine, it is perceived as a "sign." The shrine environment brings emotional intensity to its peak with elements such as associations of death and the afterlife, prayer, weeping, the smell of incense, silence, and collective ritual. As emotional intensity increases, the brain codes events more permanently and meaningfully. This is a neuroscientific fact: in states of high emotional arousal, amygdala activation increases and events leave stronger traces in long-term memory. These traces later feed the belief that "something happened there that day."

Meaning Extraction and Pattern Seeking: The Brain's Functional Error

The human brain has difficulty accepting coincidence. The inference "if something happened, it must have a cause" is a functional mechanism for survival. This mechanism also processes non-existent connections as if they were real. In the shrine context this tendency is particularly strong, because the person goes there already with an "expectation of meaning." The brain selects, stores and reinforces information compatible with the expectation. Information incompatible with expectation — wishes that did not come true — is systematically ignored or neutralized with alternative explanations ("it wasn't meant to be," "it is a test").

The Need for Psychological Control and Coping with Uncertainty

Situations such as illness, unemployment, marital problems, and inability to have children produce in a person a deep sense of loss of control. This state of uncertainty and helplessness is an experience that is extremely difficult for the mind to tolerate. The shrine at this point offers a functional psychological solution: "I did something. I can influence the process. Control has not completely slipped from my hands." The psychological value of this belief is real; however, this value does not stem from the truth of the belief, but from its functionality in the inner world of the

believer. The belief established at the shrine — "there is an invisible influence here and I have reached it" — restores the sense of psychological control, reduces anxiety and increases motivation. Yet this psychological benefit does not legitimize theological error.

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL DIMENSION — CLINICAL PICTURES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SHRINE PRACTICES

Schizotypal Personality Disorder and Magical Thinking

Magical thinking, which figures among the diagnostic criteria of schizotypal personality disorder, involves establishing cause-and-effect relationships that are inconsistent with objective reality. Individuals with this presentation live out completely subjective and irrational connections — such as "if you enter the shrine with your left foot, life will come into order" or "if I walk around the grave three times my wish will be granted" — as absolute truths. The tendency to relate completely unrelated events to their own situation, referred to as ideas of reference, is markedly high in these individuals. During a shrine visit, the sudden blowing of wind, the singing of a bird, or the flickering of a lamp is processed by these individuals as a "sign that the prayer has been accepted." These interpretations feel real and indisputable to the person; and when recounted to others, they also find resonance in some listeners.

Dependent Personality Disorder and External Attribution Tendency

Dependent personality disorder is characterized by patterns of difficulty in decision-making, avoidance of taking responsibility, and excessive reliance on others. For individuals with this structure, the shrine offers an extremely attractive object of attachment: control over life is not in their own hands — "the one resting there" is managing it. When a problem is solved, saying "He took care of it" rather than "I succeeded" gives these people the opportunity to externalize responsibility and meet their need for refuge. This dynamic also perpetuates dependency on shrines. Running to the shrine at every difficulty prevents the individual from developing their own problem-solving capacity and deepens vulnerability.

Borderline Personality Disorder and Idealization

The splitting defense mechanism seen in borderline personality disorder classifies objects or persons as either "entirely good" or "entirely bad." Individuals with this presentation idealize the shrine and the figure resting there as a flawless, transcendent, absolutely redemptive figure. Their tendency to perceive the temporary emotional relief experienced there — a response also visible in healthy individuals — as a miracle or as direct acceptance of prayer is very high. The intensity of emotional fluctuations prepares a ground of experience that reinforces and feels genuinely real to this interpretation.

Narcissistic Tendencies and the Sense of "Being Chosen"

In certain individuals, the shrine visit becomes an instrument of concealed narcissistic gratification. The narrative "I prayed and the one resting here conveyed

my prayer directly upward" attributes to the person a special and chosen position among ordinary people. Recounting this experience to others confers spiritual status and authority. The discourse "my prayer was accepted" within the community assigns the person both prestige and a kind of guiding role; this role feeds narcissistic needs.

Psychotic Presentations: Delusions, Hallucinations and Mass Hysteria

The most severe clinical dimension is constituted by psychotic processes. Individuals in the manic phase of schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder may experience mystical delusions in the shrine environment. While an average visitor says "a peace filled my soul," a psychotic patient may report that the person in the shrine rose from the grave and spoke with them, gave them a secret mission, or that they saw a light in the sky. Auditory hallucinations in these individuals acquire special content in the shrine context: voices in the form of "your prayer has been accepted, my servant" or "I see you, my child" are experienced so realistically and vividly that it is almost impossible for the person to question them. The medical counterpart of these experiences — referred to in common parlance as "a call came to me" or "it was whispered to my heart" — is hallucination. An even more serious dimension is the structures in which individuals within this psychotic picture are able to assume positions of leadership. The powerful narrative conveyance of a charismatic tariqa or community leader's psychotically-rooted experiences can leave deep impressions on individuals with suggestible and dependent personality structures. Episodes of mass hysteria and collective sharing of delusions in the form of "we all went to the shrine together and that night we experienced this" take shape through this dynamic.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSION — THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF BELIEF

Cultural Transmission and Primary Socialization

The great majority of people arrive at shrine belief not through their own original experiences but through narratives transmitted from their surroundings. An individual who grows up hearing stories of "whoever goes to such-and-such shrine gets their wish" already arrives at that shrine with a powerful expectation. The brain has accepted this expectation as its "default explanatory model." The experience is interpreted so as to confirm this model, because the model has predetermined the framework of interpretation.

The Narrative Economy: Which Stories Survive?

In the social narrative economy, not all stories carry equal weight. The story "I went to the shrine and my prayer was not accepted" is not told — it is neither found worth telling nor does it place the person, in the believing community, in the position of someone weak or deemed unworthy. By contrast, the story "I went to the shrine and had a child / my illness passed / I got a job" is shared with the community, celebrated, reinforced and told again and again. This filtering mechanism causes only positive examples to occupy social memory. Whatever the actual success rate, the rumor rate always remains high. This lowers the threshold for new generations to begin this

practice.

Tariqa Structures and Institutional Reinforcement

Some tariqa structures begin to attribute a status of sanctity to their founders or prominent sheikhs following their death. This attribution is not coincidental; it arises from an institutional need: narratives of "miraculous feats from the grave" become a functional instrument for keeping the spiritual authority of the sheikh alive after death, maintaining the bond of the community, and attracting new members. In these structures, individual psychotic experiences can be transformed into a collective narrative. The strong suggestion of the leader figure, the closed information environment of the group, and the social cost of leaving from within — the fear of exclusion, of being humiliated — create powerful pressures that prevent the questioning of these beliefs.

The Shrine Economy and Material Interests

The economy of visitation that forms around shrines cannot be overlooked either. Tradespeople in shrine vicinities, shrine administrations, and sometimes state institutions derive material benefit from these places remaining functional. This economic interest produces a social resistance against the questioning of these practices. The narrating of "miraculous feats" overlaps, directly or indirectly, with certain economic interests.

AN INTEGRATED EVALUATION

The True Source of the Matter

The source of the experiences accompanying shrine practices is not the person resting there, but rather the combination of the following mechanisms inherent to the human mind:

Causal attribution error, selective memory and survivorship bias, the expectation and placebo effect, the strengthening of memory by emotional intensity, external attribution arising from the need for control, the social narrative filter, primary cultural coding, and in some cases psychopathological processes.

These mechanisms feed and reinforce one another. The resulting experience feels to the person extremely real and meaningful. However, the intensity of this subjective reality is not proof of its objective truth.

Why Do Fabricated Shrines Also "Work"?

The answer to this question constitutes the key point of the entire analysis. When a completely empty piece of land is given the appearance of a grave and people are told "a saint is buried here," people feel the same emotions and produce similar stories of miraculous feats. This phenomenon proves conclusively that the experiences undergone have no relationship whatsoever with the person resting there. The effect stems not from the person, but from expectation, emotional intensity, selective memory and the need to make meaning. Whoever is buried there

— or even if no one is buried at all — the mechanism operates in the same manner.

The Intersection of Theological, Psychological and Sociological Dimensions

The three dimensions complement one another and point toward a common conclusion: shrine practices rest not on a transcendent reality, but entirely on mechanisms immanent — that is, belonging to human nature itself, to psychology, and to social patterns. Theologically, this is the misdirection of help and supplication — that is, shirk. Psychologically, it is the product of the brain's functions of meaning-making and seeking control. Sociologically, it is the perpetuation of an artificial consensus produced by narrative filtering and cultural transmission.

Shrine visits and the practice of seeking help from the dead may, on a superficial view, appear to be a religious observance. However, a thorough examination reveals that this practice constitutes shirk from the standpoint of Islamic creed, that it is nourished psychologically by the structural fallacies of the human mind, and that it is reproduced sociologically through selective narrative mechanisms. The declaration of Surah Al-Fatiha, repeated in every prayer — "You alone we ask for help" — draws a simple but unambiguous boundary. Abdul Qadir Gilani too, Telli Baba too, and anyone else — all are helpless servants of Allah. Seeking help from them, attributing to them senses and power of agency, is shirk. Understanding that psychological processes produce powerful mechanisms that feed these practices does not automatically legitimize those practices. The fact that the human mind experiences something as "real" is not proof that it truly exists. The placebo effect is real; but the fact that the medicine is a placebo continues to stand alongside it.

In conclusion, shrine practices are devoid of a genuine foundation both religiously and rationally. Underlying the people's inclination toward these practices are ignorance, deeply embedded psychological needs, cultural codings and structural cognitive tendencies.

A Critical Analysis of the Evil Eye Belief: A Comprehensive Evaluation Through Theological, Psychological, and Social Dimensions

The evil eye belief stands as one of the most deep-rooted and widespread folk beliefs in human history. Transcending geographical boundaries — from the Mediterranean basin to Central Asia, from South America to South Asia — this belief system rests on the assumption that certain individuals' gazes, or a mysterious energy emanating from their eyes, can harm other people, living beings, and objects. Carried through the centuries via oral culture, religious discourse, and social practices, it has left deep marks on everyday language, architecture, art, and even economic relations. Yet uncritical acceptance of this belief carries serious consequences both individually and socially. The evil eye is not a Quranic truth but rather a psychological mechanism born from humanity's struggle to make sense of its own weaknesses, fears, and the inevitable randomness of life — and when nurtured and strengthened, this mechanism stunts personal development, erodes social trust, and most importantly, lays the groundwork for deviation from the principle of tawhid.

Conceptual Framework: What Is the Evil Eye?

The word nazar is of Arabic origin, meaning "to look" or "to observe." In folk belief, it is defined as a supernatural force emanating from certain people's eyes or gazes that harms the person, animal, or object it targets. This force is believed to be triggered by emotions such as envy, admiration, or malicious intent, and is treated as though it were a biological-metaphysical reality. Shaped by rituals, symbols, and precautions that vary from culture to culture, this belief has penetrated social life through tangible practices such as blue beads, lead castings, amulets, and talismans. A full-fledged economy has even formed around these practices, giving rise to a broad sectoral structure stretching from evil eye bead producers to sorcerers, from hodjas to talisman sellers and mediums.

The Quran's View of the Evil Eye: Reality or Interpretive Overreach?

The Quran Contains No Direct Evil Eye Verse

When discussing the Islamic legitimacy of the evil eye belief, one fundamental fact must be stated clearly: not a single verse of the Holy Quran explicitly refers to a force emanating from human gazes that can produce biological or metaphysical harm. Despite this, traditional discourse cites three surahs or verses as proof of the evil eye belief: verses 51–52 of Surah Al-Qalam, Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah An-Nas. However, a close examination of the context of these surahs reveals that this interpretation involves serious semantic overreach.

A Correct Reading of Surah Al-Qalam, Verse 51

The phrase "they almost struck you down with their glances" is frequently presented as the Quranic foundation of the evil eye. Yet when the context in which this verse was revealed is carefully examined, it becomes clear that the expression is a powerful literary depiction of the mushrikin's deep hatred toward Prophet Muhammad, their rage, and their desire to break him psychologically — not a supernatural claim. This is a widely employed rhetorical device in the eloquence tradition of the Arabic language. To reduce this literary metaphor, which uses an intense gaze to convey "murderous hatred" or "rage that tears apart," to a biological-metaphysical phenomenon of causing harm through rays or energy emitted from the eyes is to ignore both the nuanced structure of the language and the true purpose of the verse.

The True Message of Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nas

Both surahs command seeking refuge in Allah from various evils that surround humanity. The phrase "from the evil of the envier" in Surah Al-Falaq carries a notable depth of meaning. What is sought protection from here is the traps an envious person may set, the slanders they may spread, and the concrete, actual harm they may cause — all driven by that dark emotion. The expression speaks of protection from the practical manifestations of ill intent, not from a mystical flow of energy shooting out of an eye. In other words, the Quran acknowledges the dark dimensions of human psychology and the concrete actions this darkness may trigger, but

nowhere confirms the claim that these emotions radiate outward as a physical or metaphysical energy.

Verses That Refute the Evil Eye Belief

Moreover, the Quran contains verses that explicitly exclude or directly contradict the evil eye belief. Among the most striking is Surah Ash-Shura, verse 30: "Whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your own hands have earned. And He pardons much." This verse places the responsibility for adversities squarely on the individual's own actions and decisions, rather than delegating that responsibility to vague external forces with unknown agents. Surah Al-Qamar, verse 49, reinforces this same principle: "Indeed, We have created everything in due measure." Surah Al-Hijr, verse 21, completes this truth: "There is not a thing but that its depositories are with Us, and We do not send it down except in a known measure." Taken together, these verses make clear that everything in the universe occurs according to Allah's absolute will and the measure He has determined. In such a conception of the cosmos, it is impossible to speak of an autonomous, supernatural force operating entirely outside of Allah's knowledge and control.

Theological Problems With the Evil Eye Belief From the Perspective of Tawhid

Reducing Allah to a Passive Role

Tawhid — the most fundamental principle of Islam — is grounded in Allah's absolute oneness, perfection, and complete sovereignty over all things. According to this principle, every event that occurs in the universe, at every moment, falls within Allah's knowledge, will, and control; there is no force, no mechanism, that operates independently of Him. Against this backdrop, the theological danger embedded in the evil eye belief becomes unmistakable: to believe that certain individuals' gazes can independently produce harm outside of Allah's permission and laws is to position Allah as passive, incapable of rectifying the situation, and not fully sovereign over the very order He created. This is an extremely grave theological distortion that runs counter to the very spirit of tawhid.

The Door to Hidden Shirk

Attributing superhuman or supernatural power to beings other than Allah is regarded in Islam as one of the most obvious forms of shirk. The evil eye belief carries a critically important risk in this regard: granting certain individuals' eyes the capacity to cause harm purely by their own will, with no involvement from Allah whatsoever, is to open a door — in the intellectual realm — to actual shirk. This overlaps with the tendency the Quran forcefully rejects: inventing partner forces within Allah's domain of authority and sovereignty. Those who believe in the power of the evil eye must rigorously interrogate the theological weight their belief carries.

The Semantic Drift in the Use of "Mashallah"

The expression mashallah literally means "what Allah has willed." Originally a phrase of praise and gratitude, it has over time been transformed in popular usage into "a magic charm against the evil eye." This transformation reflects a clear deviation from

Quranic understanding and carries the danger of reducing a religiously rich expression to a mere supernatural protection ritual.

Psychological Analysis: The Mental Mechanisms That Feed the Evil Eye Belief

Locus of Control and Ego Protection

Psychology uses the concept of "locus of control" to explain the ways people interpret negative events — whether individuals attribute events affecting their lives to internal sources (their own decisions and actions) or external ones (luck, others). The evil eye belief functions psychologically as an extremely powerful "external locus of control." Rather than saying "I made a mistake" or "This stems from a cause that can be changed," a person who has an accident, whose affairs go wrong, or who falls ill says instead "I was struck by the evil eye," thereby shielding the ego. This mechanism is the easiest and least costly way to escape feelings of guilt — but it renders personal responsibility and growth equally easy to forgo.

Selective Memory and Confirmation Bias

The human mind dislikes ambiguity and has a powerful tendency to construct coherent chains of causation for the events it experiences. In psychology, this process — called "confirmation bias" — involves selectively highlighting data that supports one's pre-existing beliefs while ignoring evidence that challenges or undermines them. The evil eye belief operates in perfect harmony with this mechanism. When something negative happens to you a few days after someone praised you or your belongings, the mind immediately links the two events. Yet on countless days when you received no praise, similar adversities also occurred — but since no ready-made explanation like "evil eye" was at hand in those moments, the events were simply filed away as ordinary occurrences and forgotten. Only the memories that feed the belief remain, making it appear as though the belief is constantly being "confirmed."

The Expectation Effect and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

One of the most destructive psychological dimensions of the evil eye belief is that it directly causes performance loss. A person who believes they have been struck by the evil eye is plunged into intense anxiety. This anxiety scatters their attention, makes concentration more difficult, and negatively affects both cognitive and motor performance. When the anticipated "bad event" inevitably occurs, the person attributes it to the evil eye. Yet the actual cause is not the event itself but the fact that fear of the evil eye disrupted psychological balance, and this imbalance created fertile ground for error or failure. Known in psychology as the "self-fulfilling prophecy," this process strikingly illustrates how the evil eye belief operates against the very individual who holds it.

Projection: Casting One's Own Darkness onto Others

Another psychological mechanism is projection. The individual externalizes emotions they find difficult to acknowledge within themselves — such as envy, jealousy, or malicious intent — in the form of "someone else is looking at me with evil." The

thought "I don't envy them; my affairs are going wrong because they envy me" is a typical manifestation of this process. This mechanism prevents the person from confronting the negative emotions in their own inner world and makes it easy to shift personal responsibility onto others.

The Fear of "Being Noticed": A Formula for Social Anxiety

The eye is one of the most powerful symbols in human psychology. Being under the gaze of others keeps a person reflexively "on guard." Standing out with notable qualities — success, beauty, or wealth — brings with it an anxiety of being "exposed to attack." The evil eye belief is the culturally formulated version of this social anxiety: the fear of "being noticed" is in essence a symbolic reflection of the fear of becoming a target in society and being attacked. The most concretely destructive consequence of this fear is "low-profile behavior." Individuals who fear being struck by the evil eye tend — consciously or unconsciously — to conceal their happiness, successes, and joys. This disposition erodes sincerity in society, transforms success from something to be celebrated into a threat to be hidden, and fundamentally obstructs the formation of a healthy social atmosphere.

The Social Devastation: The Social Cost of the Evil Eye Belief

Mistrust and Hypocrisy

The deepest wound the evil eye belief inflicts on the social fabric is the chronic atmosphere of mistrust it spreads. The question "Whose eye could have struck?" prepares the ground for perceiving everyone around as a potential threat. This state of suspicion feeds gossip, normalizes hypocritical relationships, and makes the formation of genuine human bonds practically impossible. Declarations of love are driven not by sincerity but by obligation. Gestures of respect remain artificial and hollow. The natural openness that living together requires gives way to calculated distance.

The Destruction of Self-Criticism and the Stagnation of Personal Growth

Attributing failure or adversity to the "evil eye" erects walls against a person's ability to confront their own mistakes and shortcomings. Carelessness becomes not a product of one's error but of the evil eye. A poor decision originates not from one's lack of judgment but from someone else's malicious gaze. Recklessness triggers not self-criticism but the evil eye narrative. In this vicious cycle, personal growth halts; individuals can no longer learn from their mistakes and grow through them, and they continue to repeat the same errors.

The Entrenchment of a Culture of Fear in Society

The spread of the evil eye belief prepares fertile ground for a deep culture of fear to take root in society. Individuals come to fear even their own shadows; they become reluctant to share good news. Children's achievements, families' joys, and communities' gains — rather than being causes for celebration — are perceived as risks to be concealed. This picture portrays the exact opposite of a healthy social psychology: a collective existence that is suppressed and suffocating within itself.

A Scientific Perspective: An Unsubstantiated Claim

The scientific world has to date been unable to produce a single reliable finding demonstrating that human gazes can, through any biological or metaphysical mechanism, harm other people, animals, or objects. Social psychological phenomena such as people observing one another, the feeling of "being watched" generating anxiety, and the Hawthorne effect have been scientifically documented; but none of these point to a supernatural damage mechanism of the kind posited by the evil eye belief. Attempts to fabricate quasi-scientific frameworks to lend credibility to the evil eye — a pattern encountered not only with this belief but with many folk beliefs — consistently fail to meet the rigorous methodological standards of genuine scientific inquiry and are not accepted as valid evidence by the academic community.

The evil eye belief feeds on humanity's existential anxieties, its intolerance of uncertainty, and its tendency to flee from responsibility. It has no explicit place in any verse of the Quran, seriously contradicts the fundamental principles of tawhid, and psychologically nourishes harmful mechanisms that blunt self-criticism and arrest personal development. Beyond this, it causes deep social destruction by corroding social trust, spreading hypocrisy, and leaving individuals afraid of their own shadows. Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 35, expresses the essence of this matter most concisely: "Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial. And to Us you will be returned." This divine declaration makes clear that life inevitably encompasses both good and difficult moments. The attitude befitting a Muslim is not to consign hardships to unknown agents, but to understand them as part of Allah's wise trial, to honestly carry one's own responsibility, and to practice true tawakkul — that is, to take the necessary means and leave the outcome to Allah. Liberation from the evil eye belief is not limited to abandoning a folk superstition. It is, equally, the attainment of a deeper, more authentic, and more mature understanding of faith: a firmly rooted conviction that the reins of the universe rest in Allah's hands alone, that both the beauties and the pains of life take shape within a divine wisdom and measure, and that the human being's true responsibility is not to ask "whose eye struck me?" but to render an account of their own choices and actions.

Gayb, Ledün Knowledge and Manipulation: The Boundary Between Scientific Foresight and Mystical Deception

Throughout human history, the claim of "knowing the future" has been used as a powerful instrument of influence over the masses. This claim has sometimes appeared in religious guise, sometimes marketed as a mystical rank, and sometimes been justified through pseudo-scientific arguments. Yet the Quran draws an unmistakably clear line on this matter: the Unseen (Gayb) belongs to Allah alone. "Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah." (Naml, 27:65)

Here we will demonstrate that the scientific foreseeability of geological, climatic, biological, and sociological cycles places these events outside the scope of "Gayb," while simultaneously analyzing how concepts such as Ledün knowledge have been instrumentalized, and how narcissistic figures who manipulate society feed upon this

void.

Linguistic and Theological Analysis of the Concept of Ledün Knowledge

The True Meaning of the Expression "Min Ledünnâ"

The expression "min ledünnâ ilmen" (knowledge from Our Presence) in Surah Al-Kahf has been misinterpreted for centuries and drawn toward a mystical meaning. In certain traditional circles, this expression has been presented as a type of knowledge given by Allah exclusively to select individuals — a secret knowledge closed to all others. Yet linguistically, the word "ledünnâ" is neither an adjective nor the name of a special branch of knowledge. It is an adverb indicating the source to be Allah; that is, it means "from Allah's side, from Allah's presence." Therefore, what is emphasized in this verse is not the type of knowledge, but its source. All knowledge originates from Allah. When we read the verse in this light, we arrive at the following conclusion: constructing a separate and mysterious category of knowledge called "Ledün knowledge" is a distortion of the Quran's language.

All Knowledge Is from Allah

The fundamental epistemological principle of Islam is that the source of all genuine knowledge is Allah. Medical science, physics, geology, and sociology all amount, in the end, to discovering the laws governing the workings of the universe that Allah created. From this perspective, no fundamental distinction can be drawn between "Ledün knowledge" and "modern science." Both rest upon the laws of cause and effect that Allah has established — that is, upon Sünnetullah. Those who invent a separate and mysterious category of Ledün knowledge have either failed to comprehend the truth that Allah is the source of all knowledge, or they are consciously instrumentalizing this concept.

Scientific Foresight Is Not Gayb

Geological Cycles

The earth has been moving through great cycles spanning millions of years. Scientific knowledge of these cycles removes such events from the scope of Gayb. The supercontinent referred to as Pangea Ultima is projected by the science of plate tectonics to re-form in approximately 250–300 million years. Alongside the horizontal movement of continents, vertical movements also occur; when glaciers melt, land rises, and as weight increases, it subsides — a process known as isostasy. The East African Rift System will gradually split the African continent in two, and millions of years from now, a new ocean will form between those two landmasses. Mountains erode and are worn down, while new ones rise. The Alps will gradually diminish, while new mountain ranges will form in other regions. Massive volcanic events — Large Igneous Province (LIP) eruptions — have recurred throughout history, and science definitively predicts that such events will recur again. Geomagnetic reversal, meaning the shifting of Earth's magnetic poles, has occurred many times in the past. That it will occur again is a known fact; only its precise timing cannot be determined.

Climate Cycles and Natural Disasters

The arrival of a new ice age is scientifically inevitable. Milankovitch cycles and variations in solar activity indicate that the ice ages that have repeatedly occurred in the past will occur again. Mega-tsunamis, volcanic island formations, major landslides, and asteroid impacts are likewise phenomena that have happened before and are known to happen again. Looking specifically at Turkey, it is a scientific fact that the North Anatolian Fault and the East Anatolian Fault continuously accumulate and release energy. When fault rupture cycles are examined, it becomes clear that a major earthquake will strike the Marmara region. Tsunamis in the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts linked to seabed movements, landslides in the Black Sea region, and erosion from rising sea levels in coastal cities — all of these are developments anticipated by the scientific community. Given Turkey's forested geography, scientific data plainly shows that summer conditions make forest fires nearly inevitable in Mediterranean coastal provinces such as Antalya, Mersin, Adana, and Hatay; that the Aegean coastline including Muğla, İzmir, and Aydın carries fire risk alongside prolonged dry summers; and that forested areas in Çanakkale, Balıkesir, and Bursa are also exposed to this risk.

Biological Cycles and Epidemics

Throughout history, epidemics of plague, influenza, and smallpox have recurred periodically. The COVID-19 pandemic experience demonstrated that such crises are not merely theoretical but concrete realities. Zoonoses originating from bats, birds, and pigs may open the door to new pandemics. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria — so-called "superbugs" such as MRSA — and resistant strains of tuberculosis pose a growing threat to global health systems. With advances in synthetic biology, laboratory-originated biological hazards have also come to the fore. The expanding geographical range of mosquitoes driven by climate change makes it increasingly likely that tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever will appear in Europe and the Mediterranean basin. All of this information constitutes forecasts grounded in scientific observation and modeling. Stating these things is not making a claim to Gayb — it is correctly reading the laws of cause and effect.

Sociological Cycles

The Quran expresses this reality as follows: "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?" (Baqarah, 2:214). Throughout history, wars, famines, social collapses, and reconstructions have recurred in cyclical patterns. The conflict centered on Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa between Muslims and Jews, the Iran-Israel tension, and the Palestinian cause — all have roots in concrete political, historical, and geopolitical realities. Predicting that these conflicts will intensify is not prophecy but the result of political analysis.

Mystical Prophecy Claims as an Instrument of Manipulation

The Structure of Deception

Claiming to know the future is one of the oldest forms of manipulation in history. The essence of this structure is as follows: phenomena already known to occur — geological cycles, social fractures, psychological patterns — are taken and presented as if learned through some mystical secret. When the event occurs, authority is established by declaring "I told you so." Yet the Quran is unequivocal on this point: only Allah knows the Unseen. The fact that events are known to occur does not mean they are Gayb. The unknowability of exact dates constitutes the true dimension of Gayb. Conflating these two concepts is a serious epistemological error.

Patterns of False Mahdi Claims and Religious Manipulation

In every era, certain communities have proclaimed their leaders the Mahdi. This pattern proceeds through defined stages. First, a figure exhibiting delusions of reference emerges; he positions himself as someone special, chosen, and bearing a divine message. As this figure receives validation from those around him, he may come to believe himself to be the Mahdi. After his death, his followers continue to disseminate his views; the leader is proclaimed the Mahdi even posthumously. In the final stage, the organization begins to position itself as the Army of the Mahdi, employs symbolic elements such as black banners, and seeks to spread its ideology by force. False Messiahs also emerge throughout this process. And sadly, false Messiahs have appeared in every age and will continue to appear. Yet the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will not come in any era other than his own appointed time.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Claims of Religious Authority

Individuals with narcissistic personality disorder view themselves as superior to others, believe they are special and chosen, exaggerate their achievements or construct imaginary ones. They cannot tolerate criticism; when denied approval they respond with rage, fragility, or contempt. Their capacity for empathy is weak, and they use people as instruments for their own ends. When this personality profile is combined with a religious leadership role, an extremely dangerous situation arises. The belief in being "chosen" is reinforced by claims of receiving divine revelation or special knowledge. Communities that form around such figures can gradually become closed groups that abandon critical thinking and display absolute devotion to the leader.

Antisocial Personality Disorder and Religious Organization

Individuals with antisocial personality disorder lie, commit fraud, deceive others, and frequently violate rules and laws. They disregard the boundaries and feelings of others, feel no guilt or remorse. They normalize harmful behavior, easily become enraged and exhibit aggressive conduct, and use people for their own benefit. Within religious organizations, this profile manifests as illegal acts carried out in the name of "faith," coercion and exploitation of community members, transfer of resources, and the restriction of individual freedoms.

Conspiracy Theories and the Danger of Half-Truths

A particularly notable form of manipulation involves mixing scientifically accurate facts with entirely baseless claims. For example: the reality of climate change is true; but the claim that "rainfall has been stolen" is an outright lie. The fact that earthquakes will recur along specific fault lines is a scientific truth; but the claim that "earthquakes were deliberately caused by certain parties" is technologically impossible and manipulative. The fact that epidemics can originate from zoonotic sources is true; but the claim that "diseases were intentionally engineered" is in most cases groundless. This mixture is consciously employed to gain people's trust. Telling fifty percent of the truth and filling the rest with lies is a far more effective form of manipulation than outright falsehood.

Sünnetullah and True Knowledge

The Cause-and-Effect Order in the Universe

Looking at the Quran as a whole, it is clear that Allah operates the universe according to specific laws. These laws are called Sünnetullah. The verse "And it is He who sends down water from the sky in measured amounts" (Zukhruf, 43:11) indicates that nature functions not chaotically but within defined limits and measures. This truth forms the foundation of scientific inquiry. Scientists develop forecasts by discovering this measured and orderly functioning of nature. These forecasts are not claims to Gayb — they are the reading of Sünnetullah.

The Unknowability of Exact Timing Is the True Dimension of Gayb

A careful distinction must be drawn among the following three matters. First, knowing that an event will occur — this is scientific foresight. Second, modeling how an event will occur — this too is scientific work. Third, knowing exactly when an event will occur — this is the true dimension of Gayb. That a major Istanbul earthquake will happen is a scientific fact. In which year, which month, which second it will occur cannot be determined by science, and this temporal dimension genuinely falls within Gayb.

New Idols and New Currents of Irreligion

In every age, new forms of belief, new idols, and new currents of irreligion have emerged. This cycle too is a sociologically foreseeable pattern. In the present day, tendencies can be observed in which artificial intelligence is perceived as a kind of divine or infallible source of knowledge; a portion of humanity has been taking steps to sanctify this technology. This too is a form of acquiring a new idol. The verse "There is no city but that We will destroy it before the Day of Resurrection or punish it with a severe punishment" (Al-Isra, 17:58) draws attention to the universal and cyclical nature of societal destruction.

Conclusion

The picture set forth here rests upon the following fundamental truth: events known to occur are not Gayb. Geological cycles, climate changes, epidemics, social fractures, and psychological patterns are all phenomena that can be studied and modeled by science. Presenting these events as "miracles" or "divine gifts" is nothing

other than marketing scientific knowledge as a mystical commodity. Inventing a separate and mysterious category of knowledge called Ledün knowledge is a distortion of the Quran's language. The expression "min ledünnâ" identifies Allah as the source of knowledge; it does not carry the meaning of a secret bestowed upon select individuals.

The true danger threatening societies is this manipulation concealed beneath a mystical guise. The claims to prophecy employed by figures with narcissistic or antisocial personality disorder to attain religious authority, the discourse of false Mahdis, the half-true conspiracy theories — all serve the same end: to bring people under control and exploit them.

True knowledge is the correct reading of Sünnetullah — the laws of cause and effect that Allah has placed within the universe. Claiming knowledge of Gayb, by contrast, originates either from profound ignorance or deliberate manipulation. Both represent a serious moral and epistemological deviation.

Verse 65 of Surah Naml draws an incontestable boundary on this matter: only Allah knows the Unseen. To transgress this boundary — no matter what religious form it takes — serves not truth but deception.

Fasting in the Light of the Quran: An Act of Worship at the Intersection of the Pre-Dawn Call, Astronomy, and Science

Fasting, one of Islam's acts of worship, has been at the center of Muslim communities' daily and spiritual life for centuries. However, the way this practice is carried out today — particularly the matter of determining the times of imsak (pre-dawn) and iftar (breaking the fast) — has become the focus of serious debate. A close look at the Quran's clear text, hadith narrations, and modern astronomical data reveals that the imsak times widely practiced today deviate significantly from the criteria established by the Quran.

The Language of Siyam: What Do the Words Tell Us?

The Arabic word الصِّيَام (as-siyām), used in the Quran to express the concept of fasting, is derived from the verb صَامَ (sāma). The meanings of this verb cluster around three axes: abstaining from eating and drinking, refraining from something in a general sense, and stillness or pausing. This richness of meaning shows that fasting is not merely a bodily abstinence; it involves the conscience, the will, and the spirit as well.

The word's journey through different languages is also highly illuminating. The Persian word rūze (روزه) was adopted by Iranians and Kurds, while Turks use the word oruç. The origin of oruç is traced to the Old Turkic verb urmak (to strike, to deal a blow), which over time took the form oruş and came to denote abstaining from food and drink. Thus, the names for the same act of worship in three different languages carry different imagery in their origins yet symbolize the same essence — a conscious act of renunciation.

Some circles claim that fasting is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran. Yet in Surah

Al-Baqarah, verse 187, the command "eat and drink" is followed by the phrase "then complete the siyam until night," which clearly establishes both the existence of fasting and its boundaries.

The Time Determined by the Quran: The White Thread and the Black Thread

Verse 187 of Surah Al-Baqarah defines the time of fasting with the following imagery:

> "Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread; then complete the fast until nightfall."

This expression offers an extremely concrete and observational criterion. The "white thread" symbolizes the morning light beginning to spread horizontally across the horizon; the "black thread" represents the darkness of night still holding sway. The verse identifies the moment when these two colors become distinguishable to the human eye as the time of imsak. This is not an abstract calculation but a sensory, directly observable moment. The phrase "until nightfall" in the verse also determines the time of iftar: with the setting of the sun, night begins and the fast ends. Therefore, the Quran's fasting period is a natural window of time stretching from the moment the dawn becomes visible to the eye until the sun descends below the horizon.

Fajr al-Kādhib and Fajr al-Sādiq: Two Dawns, One Truth

The Arabic word fajr means "morning," and the classical Islamic astronomical tradition recognized very early on that morning consists of two distinct phases.

Fajr al-Kādhib — the "false dawn" — is a column-shaped beam of light that rises vertically from the horizon in the darkness of night. It does not spread horizontally and fades quickly. This light is a manifestation of zodiacal light caused by the sun approaching the horizon, and it is not considered valid for imsak in the jurisprudential tradition.

Fajr al-Sādiq — the "true dawn" — is the light that spreads horizontally along the horizon, forming a distinct band of whiteness and redness. This is what the Quran means by "the white thread becoming distinct from the black thread." This threshold occurs when the sun is 9 degrees below the horizon and is clearly visible to the naked eye.

Hadith literature supports this distinction very clearly. In a narration transmitted by Abu Dawud: "Eat and drink; do not be misled by the light that rises upward — eat and drink until you see the redness spreading horizontally." In a narration by Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "Do not let Bilal's call to prayer and the elongated whiteness on the horizon deceive you at your suhoor meal. Eat and drink until the whiteness spreads." These hadiths make clear that the time of imsak is based on a clear and distinct band of light that can be confirmed by observation.

The Dilemma of Modern Calculations: 18°, 21.5°, and 9°

The main calendars used in Turkey today calculate the time of imsak based on the angular position of the sun below the horizon. However, these calculations diverge

significantly from one another and from the Quran's criterion.

The Fazilet Calendar uses the moment when the sun is 21.5 degrees from the horizon as its basis. At this time, there is no sign of dawn visible in the sky whatsoever; the eye cannot detect any band of light. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) calendar uses 18 degrees as its basis. While this calculation relies on a threshold adopted in traditional jurisprudential literature, it still begins imsak before the true dawn becomes observable. Moreover, various "safety margins" have been added to these calculations in the modern era, effectively pushing the imsak time even earlier.

The Süleymaniye Foundation, on the other hand, argues that the correct imsak time corresponds to the moment when the sun is 9 degrees below the horizon. This threshold aligns with the astronomical reality in which the true dawn becomes distinguishable to the human eye. This position is not merely theoretical; when compared with practical observations and the General Directorate of Meteorology's sunrise/sunset data, the Diyanet and Fazilet calendars show significant deviations. A striking example in this context is the district of Sultangazi. Until a few years ago part of Arnavutköy, this district began to be listed in the calendar with a different imsak time after its administrative separation, creating an artificial one-minute difference. This situation reveals that current calculations have become detached from geographical reality and shaped by administrative boundaries.

NASA Data and the Lunar Calendar: Astronomy's Contribution to Worship

It is known that during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, there were no clocks. Prayer times and fasting boundaries were determined through direct observation of the sky; the positional angles of the sun and moon along the horizon served as a practical timetable. This observational tradition can today be placed on a much more reliable footing with the precise calculation tools of modern astronomy. NASA's DE440 ephemeris, accessible via the Skyfield library, allows the ecliptic longitudes of the sun and moon to be calculated with high precision. The difference between the solar longitude (Ls) and the lunar longitude (Lm) determines the lunar phase. This difference ranges between 0 and 360 degrees; when it is close to 0 degrees, a new moon occurs; as it approaches 180 degrees, a full moon takes place. Such astronomical tools not only determine the lunar phase but can also calculate the real time of true dawn by computing the sun's angular distance from the horizon in real time. Therefore, a calculation method based on the "9-degree" threshold is grounded both in the Quran's observational criterion and in the precision of modern astronomy.

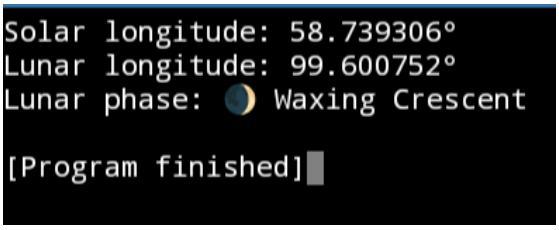
python

```
# ============================================================

# 📦 REQUIRED (on first run)

# ============================================================

# !pip install skyfield
```

```
# ============================================================
# 📚 IMPORTS
# ============================================================
import math
from datetime import datetime, timezone, timedelta
from skyfield.api import load
from skyfield.framelib import ecliptic_frame
# ============================================================
# 🌍 TURKEY TIME
# ============================================================
TR = timezone(timedelta(hours=3))
# ============================================================
# 🌌 SKYFIELD (NASA)
# ============================================================
ts = load.timescale()
eph = load('de440.bsp')
earth = eph['earth']
sun = eph['sun']
moon = eph['moon']
# ============================================================
# 🌞🌙 ACTUAL LONGITUDES (NASA)
# ============================================================
def get_longitudes(dt):
    dt_utc = dt.astimezone(timezone.utc)
    t = ts.from_datetime(dt_utc)
    e = earth.at(t)
    sun_pos = e.observe(sun).apparent().frame_latlon(ecliptic_frame)
    Ls = sun_pos[1].degrees % 360
```

```
    moon_pos = e.observe(moon).apparent().frame_latlon(ecliptic_frame)
    Lm = moon_pos[1].degrees % 360
    return Ls, Lm
# ========================================================
# 🌓 LUNAR PHASE
# ========================================================
def moon_phase(dt):
    Ls, Lm = get_longitudes(dt)
    phase = (Lm - Ls) % 360
    if phase < 22.5 or phase >= 337.5:
        return "🌑 New Moon"
    elif phase < 67.5:
        return "🌒 Waxing Crescent"
    elif phase < 112.5:
        return "🌓 First Quarter"
    elif phase < 157.5:
        return "🌔 Waxing Gibbous"
    elif phase < 202.5:
        return "🌕 Full Moon"
    elif phase < 247.5:
        return "🌖 Waning Gibbous"
    elif phase < 292.5:
        return "🌗 Last Quarter"
    else:
        return "🌘 Waning Crescent"
# ========================================================
# 🧪TEST
```

```
# ========================================================

if __name__ == "__main__":

    now = datetime.now(TR)

    Ls, Lm = get_longitudes(now)

    phase = moon_phase(now)

    print(f"Solar longitude: {Ls:.6f}°")

    print(f"Lunar longitude: {Lm:.6f}°")

    print(f"Lunar phase: {phase}")
```



The Name and Origin of Ramadan

The word Ramadan is derived from the Arabic verb ramida, which carries the meanings of burning, scorching, and blazing; ramad means intense heat. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, when the Hijri calendar had not yet been systematically established, the Ramadan fast fell close to the summer season, which made this reference to scorching heat in the name of the month highly apt. Because the Hijri calendar is based on the lunar year, Ramadan shifts approximately 10–11 days earlier each year compared to the solar year, which means it cycles through all seasons over time. The fast observed during long summer days has very different effects on the body compared to the fast observed during short winter days. The phrase in Surah Al-Baqarah 185 — "Allah desires ease for you and does not desire hardship for you" — also explains why accommodating provisions related to fasting (such as exemptions for illness and travel) were established with this reality in mind.

Fidya (Expiation): The Measure Determined by the Quran

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 184, provides a clear explanation regarding fidya:

> "These are a fixed number of days. Whoever among you is ill or on a journey shall fast the same number of other days. For those who can fast only with hardship, there is a redemption: feeding one poor person. Whoever volunteers additional good — it is better for him. But fasting is better for you, if only you knew."

Determining the Amount of Fidya

The Quran did not set fidya as a fixed figure; instead, it stipulated that it should be "enough to feed one poor person." This indicates that:

1. The amount may vary according to the economic conditions of the era.

2. Regional food prices must be taken into account.

3. It may be given directly as food, not only as money.

The fixed fidya amounts based on past juristic rulings of the legal schools fall short under modern economic conditions. For example, the cost of a meal that could genuinely feed a poor person is much higher than traditional calculations suggest.

The correct approach: When determining the fidya amount, current food prices in the region should be the basis, and the amount sufficient to meet one person's daily nutritional needs should be calculated.

The Scientific Benefits of Fasting

Modern medical research has revealed numerous physical and spiritual benefits of the fasting prescribed by the Quran:

1. Metabolic Regulation

Fasting reduces insulin resistance in the body, stabilizes blood sugar balance, and lowers the risk of Type 2 diabetes.

2. Autophagy (Cellular Cleansing)

The autophagy process discovered by Nobel laureate Yoshinori Ohsumi is activated during fasting. In this process, the body cleanses old and damaged cells, promoting renewal.

3. Cardiovascular Health

Regular fasting lowers cholesterol levels, regulates blood pressure, and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

4. Brain Function

Fasting increases the production of neurotrophic factors, enhancing brain function and showing a protective effect against neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

5. Immune System

During fasting, immune system cells are renewed, increasing resistance to infections.

6. Psychological Benefit

Fasting offers significant contributions in terms of mental clarity, stress management, and developing patience.

Superstitions and Unfounded Beliefs

1. The Claim That Satan Fasts

The widespread popular belief that "Satan fasts on the day of Eid, which is why fasting on Eid is forbidden" is entirely baseless.

Theological Analysis: Satan is defined in the Quran as a being who rebelled against Allah, considered himself superior, and is tasked with leading people astray until the Day of Judgment. It is logically impossible for such a being to perform fasting, which is an act of devotion to Allah. Because:

- Fasting is an act of worship for the forgiveness of sins.

- If Satan were to fast, this would mean he is repenting.

- A repentant Satan would cease to lead people astray.

- This contradicts Satan's very nature.

2. Satan Being Chained During Ramadan

The claim that "Satan is put in chains during the month of Ramadan" is also based on an unfounded belief. The hadiths on this subject are fabricated and contradict the Quran.

Reality: According to the Quran, Satan has been set free to lead people astray until the Day of Judgment. Satan continues his mission during Ramadan as well, though his influence may be diminished by Muslims' increased acts of worship and Allah's mercy.

Ramadan is a period of trial for Muslims. During this period, Satan:

- Encourages the breaking of the fast.

- Provokes negative thoughts.

- Seeks the neglect of acts of worship.

For this reason, Muslims should be more vigilant during Ramadan and remain alert against Satan's whisperings.

3. The Claim That Fasting on Eid Is Forbidden

This claim is a superstition devoid of religious basis and rests on the following false assumptions:

a) The Time Zone Contradiction: The world today is divided into different time zones. When it is 9:53 AM on Eid morning in Turkey:

- It is still the previous day in the western part of the world.

- Some regions to the east have already entered Eid.

- If fasting on Eid were forbidden, it would be permissible in one place and forbidden in another at the same moment.

- This contradicts the universal principles of Islam.

b) No Prohibition in the Quran: There is no verse in the Holy Quran prohibiting fasting on the days of Eid. A believer who wishes to make up missed obligatory fasts may do so even on Eid days.

c) The Origin of the Superstition: This belief emerged during a period when geographical and scientific knowledge was limited. At that time, the existence of different time zones was unknown, which is why such an illogical belief was able to spread.

The Fast of Muharram: A Tradition Remaining in Judaism

The fast of Muharram is a tradition not found in the Quran and one that belongs to Judaism.

Historical Origin

In Judaism, fasting is observed on the day of Ashura — the day when the Prophet Moses defeated Pharaoh. This tradition was carried into Muslim societies under the name "the fast of Muharram."

The Quran's Clear Ruling

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 183, speaks of the act of fasting:

> "O you who have believed, fasting has been decreed upon you as it was decreed upon those before you — that you may become righteous."

This verse refers to the obligatory fast specific to the month of Ramadan. There is no mention of fasting on any other special day or month.

The Status of the Hadiths

The hadiths concerning the fast of Muharram were fabricated after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Historical facts:

- Hadiths were prohibited during the era of the Four Caliphs.

- During the era of Muawiya, fabricating hadiths for political ends was permitted.

- The Prophet Muhammad's saying "Do not write anything from me other than the Quran" is itself found in the hadith literature (Muslim, Zuhd, 72).

Conclusion: Allah has made only the Ramadan fast obligatory.

Islamic Unity: A Forgotten Obligation

The Quran clearly commands Muslims to remain united:

> "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." (Āl-Imrān, 3:103)

The Importance of Unity

Islamic unity is:

- A religious obligation: A ruling directly commanded by Allah.

- A political necessity: Required for Muslim societies to grow stronger.

- An economic need: Essential for having a voice in the global system.

- A humanitarian duty: Indispensable for the salvation of the oppressed.

The Western world has achieved its political and economic power by acting in concert. Muslim nations, when united, can also become a global force.

The Danger of Traditionalism

Traditionalism is abandoning obligations (fard) while reviving customs (sunnah) and innovations (bid'ah).

Today, the following contradiction is being lived:

- The obligatory unity of Islam is being overlooked.

- Practices with no place in the Quran — such as the fast of Muharram — are being brought to the foreground.

- Sectarian divisions are being fueled.

- Individual interests are being placed ahead of communal welfare.

The Quran warns on this matter:

> "Fight them until there is no more fitnah and the religion is entirely for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression except against the wrongdoers." (Al-Baqarah, 2:193)

This verse commands Muslims to unite in order to eliminate oppression and establish the truth.

The Quran: The Sole Source, the Sufficient Guide

In Surah An-Nahl, verse 44, Allah says:

> "With clear proofs and scriptures… And We revealed to you the Reminder so that you may make clear to mankind what was sent down to them, and that they might reflect."

This verse clearly shows that:

- The Quran is a guide for Muslims.

- There is no need to add other sources to the religion.

- The form and essence of acts of worship are sufficiently explained in the Quran.

Religion Is Islam Alone

> "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam." (Āl-Imrān, 3:19)

The only religion accepted before Allah is Islam, and the source of Islam is the Quran. Cultural traditions, sectarian rulings, or fabricated hadiths cannot take the place of religion.

Conclusion

The act of fasting, as one of the pillars of Islam, must be understood and practiced correctly. In this context:

Regarding Time Calculations:

1. The description in the Quran must be followed: the true dawn is the moment when the observable white-black thread distinction appears.

2. Astronomical realities must be taken into account: the 9° calculation is consistent with the time described by the Quran.

3. The work of institutions such as the Süleymaniye Foundation should be evaluated.

4. Excessively early imsak times must not be set under the guise of a "safety margin."

Regarding Fidya:

1. Current economic conditions must be considered.

2. An amount sufficient to genuinely feed one poor person must be calculated.

3. A flexible approach should be adopted rather than fixed figures.

Regarding Superstitions:

1. Fabrications such as Satan fasting must be rejected.

2. The claim that fasting on Eid is forbidden must be abandoned.

3. The belief that Satan is chained during Ramadan must be relinquished.

4. Practices with no place in the Quran — such as the fast of Muharram — must not be presented as obligatory.

General Principles:

1. The Quran is the sole source: the form and timing of acts of worship are explained in the Quran.

2. Unity is obligatory: Islamic unity must be revived as a forgotten obligation.

3. Reason and science must be heeded: modern astronomy and medicine support religious truths.

4. Traditionalism must be abandoned: obligations take priority; innovations must be rejected.

As Muslims, our responsibility is to adhere to the principles Allah has set out in the Quran, to develop a religious understanding supported by reason and science, and to work toward Islamic unity. We must also perform the act of fasting with this awareness, in the manner described by the Quran.

Zakat: A Quranic Perspective

Zakat is one of the fundamental acts of worship in Islam and represents the concept of sharing what one gives wholeheartedly. Generally expressed in the Quran with the term infaq, zakat encourages a person to give a portion of their possessions to those in need. This act of worship aims to ensure economic justice in society, increase social solidarity, and achieve the spiritual purification of the individual. To whom zakat should be given and the criteria by which it should be distributed are clearly stated in the Quran.

To Whom Zakat Should Be Given: Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 60

“Indeed, the charities are only for the poor, the destitute, those who work upon it, those whose hearts are to be reconciled, the necks, the debtors, in the way of Allah, and the son of the road. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”

Surah At-Tawbah, verse 60 clearly sets out which groups zakat must be given to:

1. The poor: Individuals who cannot meet their basic needs.

2. The needy: Those who are in financial hardship.

3. Zakat collectors: Those who serve in the distribution of zakat.

4. Those whose hearts are to be reconciled to Islam: People who are expected to develop a positive attitude toward Islam.

5. Those in bondage (Riqab): Individuals who need to be freed from servitude.

6. Debtors: Those crushed under the burden of debt.

7. Those who strive in the cause of Allah: Those who struggle for the sake of religion.

8. Stranded travelers: Those who are far from their homeland and in need of assistance.

This verse corrects a common misconception that zakat must only be given to Muslims. The phrase "those whose hearts are to be reconciled to Islam" clearly shows that non-Muslims may also benefit from zakat when they are in difficult

circumstances.

Zakat and Supporting Parents

"They ask you what they should spend. Say: Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler. And whatever you do of good — indeed, Allah is Knowing of it." (Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 215)

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 215 explains to whom expenditure should be directed: "Whatever you spend of good is for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler." From this, the importance of helping one's parents is understood. However, regarding the giving of zakat to parents, the separation of financial resources among family members is a determining factor.

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 219 offers guidance on this matter: “They ask you about that which covers the mind and gambling. Say: In both of them there is great sin and benefits for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit. And they ask you what they should spend. Say: forgiveness. Thus Allah makes clear to you the signs, so that you may reflect.” If the individual and their parents have separate sources of income, giving them zakat is permissible. However, if they share the same income, giving zakat to one's parents is not considered appropriate, since in that case the person is already undertaking their livelihood. This approach ensures that zakat is distributed fairly and that the individual fulfills their own responsibilities before engaging in charitable sharing.

The Amount of Zakat: The Quran's Flexible Approach

The Quran does not limit the amount of zakat to a fixed ratio; instead, it adopts the principle of Afw (العفو). The word afw carries several different meanings that shift according to context. Its most common meanings are:

1. To forgive, to pardon: The most common meaning — to forgive someone's mistake or offense.

2. To excuse, to overlook: To ignore or forgive a person's error or wrongdoing.

3. Surplus, the excess: In Arabic, particularly in derived forms, the word afw can also mean "surplus" or "what remains beyond one's needs."

4. The temporary disappearance of something: In this sense, it can also express the temporary loss or ending of a situation or thing.

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 219 addresses the amount of zakat with the phrase: "the excess." This flexibility allows individuals to determine the amount of zakat themselves according to their economic circumstances and intentions. What matters is the intention to help those in need with the aim of earning Allah's pleasure.

Although zakat is generally perceived as an act of worship to be performed once a year, the Quran's approach indicates that it should be given at the time one receives their income. Zakat is not only to be given during a single annual period, but rather whenever income is received. This shows that zakat is not merely a financial

obligation but also an act of worship that encourages social solidarity.

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, taxes collected for the state existed alongside zakat. However, over time, these practices mentioned in narrations (riwayat) have been conflated with the zakat described in the Quran. Yet the Quranic understanding of zakat refers to a voluntary act of sharing in terms of amount, whereas taxes are compulsory financial obligations paid to the state with a fixed amount. Keeping this distinction in mind is important for understanding the spiritual and ethical dimensions of zakat.

Conclusion

Zakat is an act of worship established to strengthen the spiritual and economic fabric of Islamic society. The Quran has provided individuals with a broad scope of action by clarifying to whom, how, and to what extent zakat should be given. This act of worship is not merely financial assistance — it is also a duty that strengthens the individual's bond with Allah and increases social solidarity. The correct understanding and practice of zakat is of indispensable importance for the well-being of both individuals and society.

Wealth and Responsibility: The Qur'an's Economic Ethics

Islam's economic understanding occupies a unique position between the individualistic capitalist logic of the modern age and traditional calls for extreme self-sacrifice. The Qur'an neither sanctifies absolute poverty nor legitimizes unlimited enrichment. Instead, it offers a balanced model built on the nature of wealth, the owner's responsibility, and its social role.

The Ontology of Wealth: Ownership or Trust?

At the foundation of the Qur'an's economic teaching lies a radical shift in perspective regarding the concept of property. In the Western legal tradition, property is an absolute right; the owner may dispose of it as they wish. In Islamic thought, however, wealth does not truly belong to the human being. The real owner of all existence is God, and the human is merely a temporary user — a trustee. This ontological difference produces profound practical consequences. A person who holds no absolute right over wealth cannot hoard, conceal, or use it solely for themselves. On the contrary, they are obligated to manage this trust within certain principles. The expression highlighted in Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 19 — "And in their wealth there is a right for the one who asks and for the one who is deprived" — is the concrete manifestation of this obligation. What is particularly striking here is that alongside "the one who asks," "the one who does not ask" is also mentioned. In other words, it is emphasized that even those who are too dignified or too shy to request help also have a share in this distribution. This is an approach that elevates social assistance beyond a transactional relationship, transforming it into structural justice.

At-Tawbah 34: A Critique Not of Accumulation, But of Stagnation

Verse 34 of Surah At-Tawbah is one of the most discussed passages in Islamic economic ethics:

"And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God — give them tidings of a painful punishment."

A surface reading of this verse may give the impression that wealth or accumulation is inherently sinful. However, looking at the context of the verse and the broader economic teaching of Islam, it becomes clear that the critique is directed at a different point. The verse targets three fundamental problems:

First, the withdrawal of wealth from circulation. The economic system resembles a living organism; when circulation stops, illness begins. When wealth accumulates in certain hands and is severed from society, economic vitality disappears, poverty deepens, and social conflicts intensify. Modern economics also emphasizes the critical importance of the velocity of money for economic health. The Qur'an articulated this principle as a moral imperative fourteen hundred years ago.

Second, the neglect of social responsibilities. Islam does not view wealth as an individual achievement independent of society. Society contributes to every formation of wealth: infrastructure, security, education, markets, labor. Therefore, the wealthy person is obligated to return a portion of their earnings to society. This is not optional philanthropy — it is structural justice.

Third, wealth becoming a source of false security. The deepest dimension of At-Tawbah 34 is psychological. As a person accumulates wealth, they experience an illusion of control. They feel secure, their anxieties about the future diminish, and they live under an illusion of control. But this is an illusion, because wealth replaces trust in God. Wealth ceases to be a means and becomes an end. The Qur'an severs this bond: true security lies with God, not in wealth.

An important nuance must be emphasized here: the Qur'an does not prohibit wealth or accumulation. Among the Prophet Muhammad's companions were wealthy merchants. Figures such as Caliph Uthman and Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf were both affluent and exemplary believers. The verse criticizes not the ownership of wealth, but the idolization of wealth.

Al-Isra 29: The Balance Between Miserliness and Extravagance

One of the most distinctive aspects of Islam's economic teaching is its rejection of both extremes. Verse 29 of Surah Al-Isra summarizes this balance perfectly:

"And do not make your hand chained to your neck, nor extend it completely, lest you sit blamed and regretful."

The Rejection of Miserliness

The expression "do not make your hand chained to your neck" symbolizes extreme frugality — clutching one's wealth and sharing it with no one. This attitude, beyond mere accumulation, is a pathological state of being enslaved to wealth. The miser not only fails to fulfill social responsibilities but may even deprive their own family. Moreover, rather than using wealth as a means, they become its slave.

The Rejection of Extravagance

On the other hand, "nor extend it completely" criticizes uncontrolled spending and thoughtless generosity. The culture of waste, prevalent in modern consumer societies, is something Islam firmly opposes. However, the extravagance referred to here points not only to luxury consumption but also to irresponsible giving. The warning in the continuation of the verse — "lest you sit blamed and regretful" — is significant. Excessive generosity results in two losses for the person: first, they and their family fall into need; second, they no longer have the means to spend in the way of God. This second point is critical: Islam desires the Muslim to continuously possess the economic capacity to do good. Rather than being depleted by a single large donation, it recommends a model of sustainable generosity.

The Middle Way: Strategic Generosity

The model Islam proposes is neither hoarding nor consumerism, but a balanced, strategic, and sustainable economic behavior. In this model, a person:

1. Works and produces

2. Manages their earnings wisely

3. Meets the needs of their family

4. Makes reasonable savings for the future

5. Fulfills their social responsibilities

6. Preserves the capacity to give continuously

This model reconciles personal well-being with social solidarity. A person neither neglects their family nor society. Wealth remains in their hand but not in their heart.

Economic Justice and the Principle of Circulation

At the center of the Qur'an's economic teaching lies the idea of fair distribution and circulation of wealth throughout society. The expression in Surah Al-Hashr, verse 7 — "...so that it does not become a commodity circulating only among your wealthy" — demonstrates Islam's stance against structural inequality.

The Danger of Concentration

The concentration of wealth in certain hands (monopolization) carries not only economic but also social and political dangers. Wealth, over time, transforms into political power, and political power transforms into more wealth. An oligarchic structure thus takes shape. Society is divided into two poles: an extremely wealthy minority and an increasingly impoverished majority. We see this danger materializing in the modern world. Today, the wealthiest 1% of the world's population owns more than half of global wealth. This inequality is one of the fundamental causes of social unrest, radical movements, and political instability. Islam, fourteen centuries ago, foresaw this danger and instituted structural measures: Zakat ensures a regular

transfer of resources from the wealthy to the poor — not from the lower strata to the upper. Inheritance law prevents wealth from accumulating in a single hand. The endowment (waqf) system guarantees that wealth is converted into public benefit.

The Economic Rationale of Circulation

The circulation of wealth is rational not only morally but also economically. The economy gains vitality through the flow of goods and services. When the wealthy neither consume, invest, nor share, money becomes a frozen asset. But when money circulates:

- Consumption increases, production revives

- Employment is created

- Entrepreneurship is incentivized

- Economic growth accelerates

- Tax revenues increase

- Societal welfare rises

The Qur'an's command to spend (infaq) merges this economic reality with a moral obligation. As the wealthy share, both their own spiritual development advances and they contribute to societal welfare.

The Psychology of Wealth: The Illusion of Security

The deepest dimension of At-Tawbah 34 concerns the psychological effects of wealth. By nature, humans experience insecurity and a need for control. Wealth appears to satisfy this need. As the numbers in one's bank account grow, a person feels secure, anxieties about the future diminish, and an illusion of control sets in. But this is an illusion, because:

1. No amount of wealth provides absolute security. Wealth is powerless in the face of economic crises, wars, illness, and death.

2. Wealth continuously demands more. It does not stop once a sufficient level is reached; on the contrary, the desire to earn intensifies. Psychology calls this "hedonic adaptation" — no matter how much a person earns, they always want more.

3. Wealth deviates from its purpose. Wealth that was initially a means gradually becomes an end. A person no longer works for well-being but for wealth itself.

4. Trust in God is damaged. Reliance on God is replaced by reliance on wealth. The spiritual bond weakens.

At-Tawbah 34 breaks this psychological trap. Accumulating wealth is not a sin, but trusting in wealth and making it the center of life is an attitude that approaches idolatry. The true believer holds wealth in their hand but not in their heart. They manage wealth but are not managed by it.

The Right of the Poor: Zakat and Beyond

The expression in Adh-Dhariyat 19 — "in their wealth there is a right" — summarizes Islam's approach to social justice. Two critical points stand out here:

A Right, Not a Kindness

The verse says "right," not "kindness" or "favor." That is, when the wealthy share with the poor, they are not performing an act of generosity — they are simply returning what belongs to another. This perspective transforms mutual aid from an optional virtue into a structural obligation. The modern social welfare state expresses this principle in secular terms: taxation is not a favor the wealthy do for the poor but a right that society demands from the wealthy. Islam established this principle on a religious foundation fourteen centuries ago.

The One Who Asks and the One Who Does Not

The verse's distinction between "the one who asks" and "the one who does not" is sociologically profound. In societies, there are two types of those in need:

1. The one who asks: Those who request help and make their situation known.

2. The one who does not ask: Those who, out of honor or shame, cannot ask for help — those who appear to live normally but suffer from hidden poverty.

The second group is generally overlooked because they are invisible. Islam places this "honorable poor" under protection. The wealthy must reach not only those who knock at the door but also those too dignified to knock. This transforms social assistance from reactive to proactive.

Work and Production: Islam's Positive Economic Vision

One of the misunderstood aspects of Islam's economic teaching is the idea that it is opposed to wealth or accumulation. Yet the Qur'an:

- Recognizes trade as legitimate (Al-Baqarah 275)

- Praises earnings (Al-Jumu'ah 10)

- Encourages work (Al-Mulk 15)

- Regards taking pleasure in wealth as natural (Al Imran 14)

Among the companions of the Prophet were successful merchants, farmers, and craftspeople.

What Islam criticizes is not wealth but the corruption of wealth. That is:

- Unjust gain (Al-Baqarah 188)

- Hoarding of necessities (ihtikār)

- Riba (usury, interest, seizing more than the principal) (Al-Baqarah 275–276)

- Deceptive trade (Al-Mutaffifin 1–3)

- The idolization of wealth (At-Takathur 1–2)

Islam considers working, earning, producing, and saving within ethical boundaries to be legitimate. The aim is not to sanctify poverty but to make justice and sharing obligatory.

The Modern World and the Qur'an's Economic Vision

The contemporary capitalist system contains many of the problems the Qur'an warned against:

Concentration of Wealth

A large portion of global wealth is concentrated in very few hands. While the number of billionaires grows, billions of people live near the poverty line. This is precisely the situation warned of in Al-Hashr 7.

Consumption Fetishism

Modern humanity is the victim of the excessive spending warned of in Al-Isra 29. Consumption has become not a need but an identity. Waste has become the norm of culture.

Financialization

The economy has become detached from production and dependent on abstract financial instruments. Money generates money but creates no value. This is the global version of the interest and speculation that Islam has prohibited.

Spiritual Void

As wealth increases, happiness does not. In developed countries, depression, anxiety, and a loss of meaning are widespread. The spiritual collapse pointed to in At-Tawbah 34 is taking place.

Environmental Destruction

The logic of unlimited growth and consumption is rendering the planet uninhabitable. Islam's prohibition of waste and its concept of trusteeship offer a foundation for environmental sustainability.

Wealth Shall Be in the Hand, Not in the Heart

The Qur'an's economic teaching advocates neither extreme individualistic capitalism nor collectivist socialism. Instead, it offers a distinctive model that balances personal interest with social responsibility, reconciles freedom with justice, and integrates material prosperity with spiritual development.

The fundamental principles of this model can be summarized as follows:

1. Wealth is a trust, not a possession. The human being is not an absolute owner but

a responsible custodian.

2. Wealth is not a crime but a responsibility. Owning wealth is legitimate, but fulfilling its obligations is mandatory.

3. Accumulation is legitimate so long as it does not obstruct circulation. Taking precautions for the future is wise, but the freezing of wealth is injustice.

4. Balance is essential. Neither miserliness nor extravagance; measured, strategic, sustainable economic behavior.

5. The poor person's share is a right, not a favor. Social justice is not optional but a structural necessity.

6. Security lies with God, not with wealth. Wealth is a means, not an end; an arena of possibility, not a source of security.

7. Wealth shall be in the hand, not in the heart. The human being will manage wealth but will not be managed by it.

The economic crises of the modern world — inequality, poverty, environmental destruction, loss of meaning — are the very problems the Qur'an warned of fourteen centuries ago. The solution is neither communist egalitarianism nor capitalist competitiveness, but a balanced model that unites justice with freedom, individual well-being with social solidarity, material progress with spiritual development. At-Tawbah 34, Adh-Dhariyat 19, and Al-Isra 29 are the Qur'anic expressions of this balance. And today, these verses contain principles that can guide humanity — perhaps more so than at the time of their revelation.

Ablution, Ghusl, and Cleanliness in the Light of the Quran

In Islam, acts of worship are performed within the framework of specific conditions and preparations. Among the most important of these preparations are the ablution (wudu) required before prayer and the ritual bath (ghusl) required in certain situations. However, there are notable differences between traditional practices that have developed over centuries and the clear rulings found in the Quran.

The Definition and Elements of Ablution in the Quran

Ablution is clearly and explicitly described in the Quran in Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 6:

"O you who believe! When you rise for prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles. And if you are in a state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves fully. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you has come from the toilet, or you have touched women and cannot find water, then perform tayammum with clean earth, wiping your faces and hands with it. Allah does not wish to place hardship upon you, but He wishes to purify you and complete His favor upon you, so that you may be grateful." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:6)

This verse sets out the elements of ablution in four points:

1. Washing the face: The verse explicitly commands washing the face. This is the first and fundamental element of ablution.

2. Washing the hands up to the elbows: The hands must be washed not merely to the wrists but up to and including the elbows. The verse is unambiguous on this point.

3. Wiping the head: The verb used here is "to wipe" (mesh), not "to wash." Wiping means passing a wet hand over the surface.

4. Wiping the feet: As with the head, the verb "to wipe" is used for the feet as well. The feet are to be wiped up to the ankles.

Grammatical Analysis of the Verse and the Status of the Feet

Although traditional interpretations argue that the feet must be washed, the Arabic grammatical structure of the verse does not support this view. A careful reading reveals that the command "wash" applies only to the face and hands. The verse is structured as follows:

- "Wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows"

- "and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles"

After the verb "wash" concludes, the verse introduces the head with the conjunction "and," then introduces the feet again with "and." Both limbs are linked to the same verb — "to wipe." If the feet were to be washed, the verse would be structured differently and would contain a separate "wash" command for them. No such expression exists. The conjunction "and" here functions in the sense of "together with," indicating that both the head and feet are subject to the same action. This grammatical fact clearly demonstrates that the feet are to be wiped. Traditional interpretations on this point are based not on the literal text of the verse, but on established practice.

Situations That Nullify Ablution: The Quran's Boundaries

The Quran also identifies situations that nullify ablution in the same verse (Al-Ma'idah 5:6). The verse lists the following as nullifying conditions:

1. Relieving oneself: The phrase "or one of you has come from the toilet" refers to answering the call of nature, both minor and major.

2. Contact with women (in a sexual sense): The phrase "or you have touched women" refers to sexual intercourse or sexually charged contact.

Beyond these two situations, the Quran mentions no other condition that nullifies ablution. Yet traditional understanding lists a number of situations as nullifying ablution that are never mentioned in the Quran:

- Passing gas

- Bleeding (from wounds, nosebleeds, etc.)

- Menstruation

- Falling asleep

- Losing consciousness

- Mental illness

- Laughing out loud (according to some schools such as the Hanafis)

None of these conditions have any basis in the Quran. These additions are rooted not in the primary sources of the religion, but in later interpretations and hadith literature. Adding to the Quran's clear rulings contradicts the religion's "facilitative" character and places unnecessary burdens on Muslims' lives.

The issue of women's menstruation is of particular significance. There is no indication in the Quran that menstruation nullifies ablution. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 222 describes menstruation as follows:

"And they ask you about menstruation. Say: It is harm, so keep away from women during menstruation, and do not approach them until they are pure. When they have purified themselves, come to them as Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves." (Al-Baqarah, 2:222)

This verse states that menstruation is a natural process and that sexual intercourse should be avoided during this period, but it does not say that a menstruating woman's ablution is nullified or that she must abstain from worship. The traditional view that regards menstruating women as "najis" (impure) and bars them from acts of worship is contrary to the spirit of the Quran.

Ritual Impurity and Ghusl: The Simple Ruling in the Quran

Ritual impurity (janabah) is a state that arises from sexual intercourse or ejaculation. The Quran commands purification in this state. The phrase "if you are in a state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves fully" in Al-Ma'idah 5:6, and Surah An-Nisa, verse 43, lay out the fundamental rulings on this matter:

"O you who believe! Do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying, nor in a state of ritual impurity — except when passing through — until you have washed yourselves. And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you has come from the toilet, or you have touched women and you cannot find water, then perform tayammum with clean earth, wiping your faces and hands. Indeed, Allah is Ever-Pardoning, Ever-Forgiving." (An-Nisa, 4:43)

The verbs used in these verses are tahara (to purify) and gasala (to wash). Both refer to a general act of cleansing and bathing. The Quran does not prescribe a step-by-step ritual for how to purify oneself from ritual impurity. It simply says: "wash, purify yourselves."

What is known in traditional literature as the "ghusl" involves details such as specific sequences, intentions, and washing certain body parts a certain number of times —

none of which appear in the Quran. According to the Quran, ghusl is simply taking a shower, washing, and becoming clean. This approach is entirely practical and easy. A Muslim who is in a state of ritual impurity can purify themselves by taking a normal shower. As long as this washing covers the entire body, it is sufficient. There is no requirement in the Quran for a specific order, a specific format of intention, or washing body parts a set number of times.

Menstruation and Postnatal Bleeding: Misunderstood Issues

It is widely believed in society that ghusl is required at the end of menstruation and postnatal bleeding (lochia). Many women feel "unclean" during these periods, withdraw entirely from worship, and may even delay bathing. However, the Quran sets out a clear ruling on this matter.

Al-Baqarah 2:222, cited earlier, says that menstruation is a "harm" — a discomfort — and commands only that sexual intercourse be avoided during this period. The verse ends with the phrase "Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves," where "those who purify themselves" refers to those who cleanse themselves. At the end of a menstrual or postnatal period, what is required is simply to cleanse oneself — that is, to take a shower. The Quran does not command a special ghusl ritual in these cases, because menstruation and postnatal bleeding are not treated the same as ritual impurity (janabah). Janabah arises from sexual intercourse or ejaculation; menstruation and postnatal bleeding are natural physiological processes in a woman's body.

This misunderstanding causes many women harm both physically and spiritually. During menstruation, women feel "dirty" and refrain from reading the Quran, going to the mosque, and in some cases even from making supplication. Yet the Quran places no such prohibition. The only restriction during menstruation is sexual intercourse.

The opening verses of Surah Al-Muddaththir point to the importance of cleanliness:

"O you who covers himself! Arise and warn. And your Lord glorify. And your clothing purify. And uncleanliness avoid." (Al-Muddaththir, 74:1–5)

These verses emphasize the importance of both physical and spiritual cleanliness. For a woman to view herself as "dirty" during menstruation and distance herself from cleanliness contradicts the spirit of these verses. On the contrary, paying greater attention to hygiene during these periods is more in keeping with the essence of Islam.

Islam's Principle of Ease

The Quran emphasizes in many verses that Allah desires ease for His servants, not hardship:

"Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship." (Al-Baqarah, 2:185)

"Allah does not wish to place hardship upon you, but He wishes to purify you and complete His favor upon you, so that you may be grateful." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:6)

These verses reveal the fundamental principle of Islam: religion was not sent to complicate people's lives, but to make them easier and to bring order to them. The rulings on ablution and ghusl must be understood within this principle. The additions brought by traditional interpretations have complicated religious practice and turned worship into something burdensome for many Muslims. For example:

- Filling ablution with details not found in the Quran, such as rinsing the mouth, drawing water into the nose, and washing the ears

- Turning ghusl into a step-by-step prescribed ritual

- Increasing the number of situations that nullify ablution

- Presenting menstruation and postnatal bleeding as a state of "impurity" and "sin" for women

These approaches have made the Quran's simple and clear rulings unnecessarily complex and have obscured Islam's facilitative nature.

Tayammum: Flexibility and Mercy

The Quran shows flexibility and mercy by permitting tayammum (dry ablution) when water is unavailable. Al-Ma'idah 5:6 describes tayammum as follows:

"If you cannot find water, perform tayammum with clean earth, wiping your faces and hands."

The meaning carried by this ruling is profoundly significant. Allah does not permit Muslims to pray without ablution when water is unavailable; instead, He offers a symbolic yet valid alternative: touching the earth with one's hands.

The key point to note is that in tayammum, the hand is not actually washed with any substance. Earth does not enter under the nails, does not reach every pore of the skin, and no chemical cleansing takes place. Yet Allah accepts tayammum as a valid method of purification. This fact makes clear that the essence of ablution is not physical wetting or water making contact with every millimeter of the body. The essence of ablution is intending to worship, carrying the consciousness of purification, and submitting to Allah's command.

If Allah considers a symbolic act performed with earth — in a situation where no water is available at all — sufficient, then declaring a Muslim's entire act of worship invalid on the grounds of a thin layer of nail polish contradicts this principle directly. Such an attitude amounts to making more difficult an act of worship that Allah intended to make easy.

According to traditional understanding, nail polish forms a water-impermeable layer over the nail, causing the relevant area to remain "dry," thus invalidating the ablution. While this may seem logical at first glance, closer examination reveals numerous contradictions. First and foremost, there is no mention in the Quran of washing the nails. The phrase "wash your hands up to the elbows" describes a general act of washing; conditions such as water reaching under the nails or there being no

substance on top of the nail are not found in the verse. These details are the product of later jurisprudential tradition, not of the Quran.

Second, given that the purpose of ablution is spiritual preparation and intention, a Muslim who puts on nail polish and performs ablution carefully with full intention fully satisfies this purpose. The person has washed all their limbs including the hands, carries the consciousness of purification, and is prepared for worship. There is no basis in the Quran for a thin layer of paint on the nail to nullify this entirety.

Regarding tattoos, the position of traditional understanding produces far more severe consequences than the nail polish issue — for nail polish can be removed at will, whereas a tattoo is permanent and in many cases the product of a past shaped outside of a person's control. This inevitably raises the following questions: Must the prayer of a person who was born and raised in a non-Muslim family, got a tattoo in childhood or youth, and later chose Islam be considered invalid for the rest of their life? Is the worship of someone who had a tattoo applied not by their own choice but by the decision of others, or by force, never to be accepted?

Tattoo removal is not an accessible, affordable, and guaranteed procedure for everyone. Laser treatments are economically costly. Results vary greatly depending on the color, depth, age, and the individual's skin type. Some tattoos may fade significantly but never disappear completely; faint traces or color variations may remain. Telling such people "remove your tattoo, then worship" amounts in practice to making an impossible condition a prerequisite for worship for some people.

An even more striking dimension of this position emerges: if tattoos are considered an obstacle to ablution, then by the same logic, deep burn scars should also be considered an obstacle. Third-degree burns penetrate to the lower layers of the skin, form permanent scar tissue, and fundamentally alter the skin's structure. Even if water flows over burn scars, various foreign materials, tissue abnormalities, and permanent changes exist beneath the skin's surface. Yet no Islamic scholar has ever declared the ablution of a Muslim who has suffered serious burns to be invalid. This inconsistency clearly reveals that such rules are based not on the Quran, but on selective and arbitrary interpretations.

Tayammum demonstrates:

- Allah provides ease for His servants

- Water is not an absolute requirement for worship

- In cases of necessity — illness, travel, or lack of water — there is an alternative path

- The purpose of religion is not hardship but worship and cleanliness

Conclusion

The rulings of the Quran on ablution, ghusl, and cleanliness are clear, understandable, and facilitative. The additions and interpretations brought by traditional understanding have complicated this simplicity and caused a departure from the

essence of the religion.

According to the Quran:

- Ablution is washing the face, washing the hands up to the elbows, and wiping the head and feet. Nothing more.

- Situations that nullify ablution are relieving oneself and sexual contact. The Quran mentions no other nullifying condition.

- Ghusl is washing and cleansing oneself after becoming ritually impure. It is not a special ritual, but simply taking a normal shower.

- Menstruation and postnatal bleeding are natural physiological processes and are not treated the same as ritual impurity. At the end of these periods, normal cleansing — not a special ghusl — is sufficient.

It is important for Muslims to center the Quran in their religious practice and to question traditional interpretations. The facilitative nature of religion must always be kept in mind, and this blessing Allah has given to His servants should be received with gratitude. Cleanliness is both a physical and spiritual necessity — but this necessity exists not to burden people, but to draw them closer to Allah and to bring order to their lives. Our Lord says:

"Allah does not wish to place hardship upon you, but He wishes to purify you and complete His favor upon you, so that you may be grateful." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:6)

In the light of this verse, living our acts of worship with the simplicity and ease that the Quran shows is both more in keeping with the religion and a path closer to Allah's pleasure.

The Etymological Origins of the Words "Salât" and "Namaz"

When the origins of the word "salât" are examined, it becomes clear that this term took shape in the depths of the Semitic (Afroasiatic) language family. The shared origins among Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew form the fundamental linguistic framework that defines the semantic universe of the word. Positioning "salât" as a term of Proto-Indo-European origin or as related to Sanskrit would be a linguistically unfounded claim, since all traceable roots of the word remain within the boundaries of the Semitic language family.

Arabic Root: "Salla" and Physical Bowing

In Arabic, the verbal root of "salât" — "salla" (صلى) — carries the meanings of "to bow, to submit, to turn toward." When the morphological structure of the word is examined, it becomes clear that a physical orientation and bodily movement form the semantic core. The word "salât" (صلاة) derived from this root encompasses both physical bowing and a conscious act of servitude directed toward God. This layer of meaning in Arabic directly feeds into the diversity of the term's usage throughout the Qur'an.

Syriac: The Terms "Salât" and "Salût"

In Syriac, the word "salât" is used with the meanings of "to bend, to stretch, and to bow." It is also linked etymologically to the word "salût," meaning to pray. In the Peshitta — the Syriac version of the Bible — the term "salât" appears frequently in contexts of worship and prayer. This is concrete evidence of the deep shared meaning arising from Syriac and Arabic descending from a common Semitic root. In both languages, the semantic core of the word simultaneously contains a physical bowing movement and a spiritual orientation.

Hebrew: "Barak" and Physical Worship

In Hebrew, the word "barak" (ברך) found in the Torah carries the meanings of kneeling and prostrating. This term was frequently used in the context of submission and worship before God, taking on the religious meaning of a physical expression of reverence before the Divine. Hebrew worship terminology reflects the spiritual dimensions of physical bowing and prostration in both Judaism and subsequent Christian traditions. The Semitic origin of the word "barak" places its conceptual closeness to "salât" on a linguistic foundation.

Physical Worship in Pre-Qur'anic Sacred Texts and the Universality of Action

The Qur'an explicitly states that the act of prayer was not prescribed exclusively for Islam, but was also made obligatory for previous communities. At this point, an important conceptual distinction must be underlined: the origin of the word "salât" belongs to the Semitic language family; however, the physical action performed during worship — namely bowing, kneeling, and prostrating — is a universal practice of servitude that manifested independently across different language families and cultural spheres throughout human history. The Semitic origin of the word does not negate the universality of the action; rather, the two facts complement each other.

A notable example in this context comes from Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, the verb "nâmati" carries the meanings of "to bow, to submit," and the word "namas" derived from this verb expresses paying reverence, praying, and worshipping. The greeting "namaste," still alive in India today, is also derived from this verb: "Namah" (नमः) means "to bow, to greet, to show respect," while "te" (ते) means "to you"; together they convey the meaning "I bow to you with respect." This term appears frequently in ancient Hindu sacred writings such as the Vedas and Upanishads in the context of worship. This example is not about the etymology of "salât," but rather concerns how the act of physical bowing corresponds to a deep-rooted tradition of worship even outside the Semitic language family. In other words, "namas" in Sanskrit and "salât" in Arabic do not derive from the same root; yet both traditions independently discovered that prostration and bowing are indispensable to worship.

The table below systematically brings together expressions of physical worship found in the Torah, Psalms, and the Gospels:

| Sacred Text | Relevant Expression | Source |

|---|---|---|

| Torah | "They bowed their heads and worshipped." | 2 Chronicles 29:30 |

| Psalms | "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." | Psalm 95:6 |

| Gospel | "He went a little farther and prostrated himself." | Matthew 26:38–39 |

The references above clearly demonstrate that pre-Islamic communities also incorporated physical movements such as bowing, kneeling, and prostrating into their religious rituals. This reveals that the Qur'an did not present the concept of "salât" as something entirely new, but rather grounded a universal tradition of worship in human history within its own distinctive terminology and framework of revelation.

Contextual Uses of the Word "Salât" in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the word "salât" is used both in the broad sense of worship and specifically to denote the act of performing prayer. The semantic diversity of this word manifests concretely in the following contexts.

Context of Prayer and Supplication

"And invoke blessings upon them; indeed, your salât is a comfort for them." (At-Tawbah, 9:103)

In this verse, "salât" is used in the sense of the prayers and supplications the Prophet Muhammad directed toward the believers. This usage clearly reveals that the term operates within a broad semantic framework encompassing not only the act of performing ritual prayer, but all forms of prayer and supplication directed to God.

Context of Worship and Servitude

"Woe to those who perform salât." (Al-Mâ'ûn, 107:4)

This verse from Surah Al-Mâ'ûn warns those who perform salât yet do so with laziness and hypocrisy. The expression "those who perform salât" emphasizes that at the heart of understanding worship lies a conscious and sincere experience of devotion.

Context of Divine Support and Mercy

"It is He and His angels who bestow salât upon you, to bring you out of darkness into light." (Al-Ahzâb, 33:43)

In this verse, "salât" is used in the sense of the mercy, protection, and support that God and the angels direct toward the believers. The use of the term here reveals that "salât" is not solely an act of worship in which humans turn toward God, but also a divine grace in which God turns toward human beings.

Context of Universal Servitude and Glorification

"Indeed, each one knows its salât and its glorification." (An-Nûr, 24:41)

This verse expresses that all beings in the universe glorify God, each existing in its

own form of servitude. "Salât" here conveys a universal understanding of servitude — the orientation of all things toward God in righteousness.

Performing Prayer: "Ekimis-Salât"

"Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish salât for My remembrance." (Tâ-Hâ, 20:14)

The expression "ekimis-salât" is a term in the Qur'an that specifically defines the act of performing prayer. The word "ekimis" means to carry out in an upright, proper, and conscious manner. The meaning carried by this command emphasizes that prayer is not merely a series of physical movements, but a sincere experience of servitude in the harmony of heart, tongue, and body.

The Fundamental Distinction Between Prayer and Supplication

The Qur'an draws a clear distinction between the broad meaning of "salât" and its specific use as ritual prayer. The most evident proof of this distinction is the following verse from Surah An-Nisâ:

"Indeed, salât has been decreed upon the believers at specified times." (An-Nisâ, 4:103)

This verse contains two critical points. First, prayer is prescribed as an obligation tied to specific times; believers are required to fulfill this act of worship at designated hours, in a defined sequence of movements and recitations. Second, no such condition of timing exists for supplication; supplication is a personal beseeching that is not confined to any particular time. Consequently, the prayer denoted by "ekimis-salât" defines a regular, disciplined, and time-bound form of worship, while "salât" in its broader sense encompasses all forms of prayer and turning toward God.

The Linguistic Journey of the Word "Namaz"

Some people's claims that "namaz does not exist in Islam" are fundamentally the product of a misunderstanding regarding the historical origin of the word "namaz." The key linguistic truth to be emphasized here is this: the word "namaz" does not share the same root as "salât." While "salât" belongs to the Semitic language family, "namaz" is of Proto-Indo-European origin. The two are separate words originating from different language families that converged to denote the same act of worship.

Proto-Indo-European Root: "Nem-"

The deepest roots of the word "namaz" lie in the nem- root of the Proto-Indo-European language family. This root carries the meanings of "to bow, to greet, to prostrate." Words derived from this root appear in many languages: in Sanskrit, "namas" (नमस्) means reverence, worship, and prostration; in Latin, "nomen" and in Greek "onoma" also bear traces of the same root family. This common root of Proto-Indo-European origin preserved a similar semantic trajectory across different language families over the centuries.

From the Avestan Language to Middle Persian

Avestan is the ancient Iranian language in which the Zoroastrian sacred texts were written. In this language, the equivalent of the word "namaz" is "nemangh" or "namas," both expressing the meanings of bowing, prostrating, and praying. In the Avesta, this term was used specifically to describe the act of worship of Zoroastrians prostrating in fire temples. During the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) period, into which the Avestan language transformed over time, this word continued its existence in the form "namāç," preserving the meanings of prayer and worship. Many religious terms in Middle Persian, just like "namāç," bore deep traces from the Zoroastrian tradition.

Transition from Persian to Turkish

With the spread of Islam in Iran, the Persian word "namāz" began to be used as the functional equivalent of the Arabic concept "ekimis-salât." The Persian "namāz" (نماز), while preserving the meanings of "to prostrate, to bow, to pray" inherited from the ancient Iranian religions, also functioned in the Islamic context as meaning "to perform prayer." With the Ottoman period, Turkish underwent an intensive process of borrowing words from Persian, and "namaz" was among these words. The Turks gradually came to prefer the word "namaz" over "ekimis-salât"; this preference should be regarded not as a religious change but as the natural outcome of a process of linguistic borrowing.

In conclusion, the fact that the word "namaz" is of Proto-Indo-European origin does not make the worship it signifies independent of Islam; it simply shows that a word drawn from a different linguistic sphere came to serve as the Turkish equivalent of the Semitic-rooted concept of "salât." The word is foreign; the worship itself is the very essence of revelation.

Astronomical Foundations of Prayer Times and the Süleymaniye Foundation Calendar

The Horizon Plane and the Sun's Daily Motion

One of the fundamental concepts we learn in high school geography is how the Sun's position on the horizon plane changes throughout the day. On a horizon diagram drawn on paper, the right side represents east and the left represents west. The Sun begins rising from the east, reaches its highest point at noon, and then begins descending toward the west. The moment the Sun reaches this highest point — that is, when it crosses the meridian — is noon, and it falls exactly in the middle of the day. If the length of daylight is known, dividing it in half allows easy calculation of sunrise and sunset times. This simple geometric principle actually forms the basis of the astronomical methods used to calculate Islamic prayer times.

Prayer Times in the Quran

One of the Quran's fundamental approaches is grounding prayer times in naturally observable phenomena. The Quran defines prayer times not through abstract time intervals, but through concrete natural events. Surah Hud, verse 114 states: "Establish prayer at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night; indeed, good deeds drive away evil deeds. That is a reminder for those who remember." This

phrasing shows that prayer times must be determined according to observable astronomical events.

According to the Quran:

- Fajr (dawn prayer) begins with the separation of black and white light in the sky — the true dawn (fajr al-sadiq).

- Dhuhr and Asr are associated with shadow length and the Sun's position.

- Maghrib begins with the setting of the Sun.

- Isha enters when the red and white twilight fully disappears and darkness prevails.

All of these definitions are observable natural events that can be expressed numerically through astronomical calculation.

Astronomical Equivalents of Prayer Times

Each prayer time has an astronomical counterpart.

Fajr (Imsak): The true dawn (fajr al-sadiq) corresponds to the beginning of light spreading across the eastern horizon when the Sun is approximately −9° below the horizon. Before this, when the Sun is −18° below the horizon, a narrow vertical beam of light known as fajr al-kadhib (false dawn) appears; it is not valid for fasting purposes and the morning prayer cannot be performed at that time.

Dhuhr (Noon): The moment the Sun crosses the meridian — its highest point in the sky for that day. This is precisely calculated astronomically as the meridian transit.

Asr (Afternoon): Calculated using the Sun's altitude at noon; the zenith distance is derived from this figure.

Maghrib (Sunset): The moment the Sun crosses the geometric horizon — one of the most precisely calculated prayer times astronomically.

Isha (Night): The moment when the evening redness and twilight completely disappear. The Süleymaniye Foundation calculates this as the moment when the Sun is −9° below the horizon.

The Mathematics of Astronomical Calculation

Two fundamental astronomical parameters are used to calculate prayer times.

Solar Declination (δ): Expresses the Sun's vertical tilt in the sky and changes throughout the year. It takes positive values in summer and negative values in winter, which is why the length of daylight and prayer times vary from season to season.

Hour Angle (H): The angular distance of the Sun from the local meridian. H = 0 when the Sun is exactly on the meridian; it takes negative values at sunrise and positive values at sunset.

Using these two parameters along with the observer's latitude, the Sun's altitude in

the sky can be calculated for any given moment. Once a target altitude is defined, the corresponding time can be found with high precision using a binary search algorithm. In calculations performed with Python's Skyfield library, a 50-iteration binary search achieves precision well below one second.

Calendars in Turkey and Comparison

Three different prayer time calendars are widely used in Turkey.

The Diyanet Calendar, despite being the official state calendar, contradicts astronomical data and the Quranic definitions. In particular, the imsak (predawn) time is set well before the true fajr al-sadiq, and it claims the isha time begins with only 4–5 minutes remaining before the isha window closes.

The Fazilet Calendar is used by many mosques and Muslim communities in Turkey, yet it is the most inaccurate of the three.

The Süleymaniye Foundation Calendar was developed through extensive research led by Prof. Dr. Abdülaziz Bayındır. This calendar calculates prayer times in direct alignment with the Quranic definitions and astronomical observations. For instance, the −9° solar depression used for imsak corresponds to the observational reality of fajr al-sadiq; the −18° angle used by other calendars corresponds to the fajr al-kadhib period — the false dawn — which contradicts the Quranic definition.

Worldwide, various methods are in use: the Umm al-Qura calendar in Saudi Arabia, the ISNA method in North America, the Muslim World League (MWL) method internationally, and locally adapted calendars in countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Singapore based on geographic and jurisprudential considerations.

Sample Calculation: May 20, 2026 — Efeler

The following calculations, performed using Python's Skyfield library according to the Süleymaniye Foundation's method, give the prayer times for Efeler (latitude: 37.84°N, longitude: 27.84°E) on May 20, 2026:

| Prayer | Time |

|---|---|

| Imsak (True Dawn, −9°) | 05:07:04 |

| Sunrise | 05:54:54 |

| Dhuhr (Meridian Transit) | 13:05:10 |

| Asr (Shadow = height) | 16:57:11 |

| Sunset | 20:15:53 |

| Isha (−9°) | 21:03:52 |

from skyfield.api import load, Topos

```
from skyfield import almanac
import pytz
import math
# ----------------------------
# SETUP
# ----------------------------
ts = load.timescale()
eph = load('de421.bsp')
lat, lon = 37.8402, 27.8379
tz = pytz.timezone("Europe/Istanbul")
location = Topos(latitude_degrees=lat, longitude_degrees=lon)
observer = eph['earth'] + location
sun = eph['sun']
year, month, day = 2026, 5, 20
# Search intervals (UTC-based)
t0 = ts.utc(year, month, day, 0)
t1 = ts.utc(year, month, day, 23, 59)
# ----------------------------
# NOON, SUNRISE AND SUNSET
# ----------------------------
f_noon = almanac.meridian_transits(eph, sun, location)
t_noon_list, _ = almanac.find_discrete(t0, t1, f_noon)
t_noon = t_noon_list[0]
f_ss = almanac.sunrise_sunset(eph, location)
t_ss, e_ss = almanac.find_discrete(t0, t1, f_ss)
sunrise = next(t for t, e in zip(t_ss, e_ss) if e == 1)
sunset  = next(t for t, e in zip(t_ss, e_ss) if e == 0)
# ----------------------------
```

```
# ASR (AFTERNOON) ANGLE CALCULATION
# ----------------------------
# Get the solar altitude at noon with full precision
alt_at_noon = observer.at(t_noon).observe(sun).apparent().altaz()[0].degrees
zenith_dist = 90 - alt_at_noon
# Asr al-Awwal: arccot(1 + tan(z))
asr_alt = math.degrees(math.atan(1 / (1 + math.tan(math.radians(zenith_dist)))))
# ----------------------------
# BINARY SEARCH
# ----------------------------
def find_time_at_alt(target_alt, t_start, t_end, rising=True):
    ts_start = t_start.tt
    ts_end   = t_end.tt
    for _ in range(50):  # Increased precision
        mid_tt  = (ts_start + ts_end) / 2
        mid_t   = ts.tt_jd(mid_tt)
        current_alt = observer.at(mid_t).observe(sun).apparent().altaz()[0].degrees
        if rising:
            if current_alt < target_alt: ts_start = mid_tt
            else:                        ts_end   = mid_tt
        else:
            if current_alt > target_alt: ts_start = mid_tt
            else:                        ts_end   = mid_tt
    return ts.tt_jd(ts_start).utc_datetime().astimezone(tz)
# ----------------------------
# CALCULATE PRAYER TIMES
# ----------------------------
# Start Asr search 1 minute after noon (to avoid overlap)
```

```
t_after_noon = ts.tt_jd(t_noon.tt + (1/1440))

fajr = find_time_at_alt(-9,      t0,          sunrise,  rising=True)

asr  = find_time_at_alt(asr_alt, t_after_noon, sunset,   rising=False)

isha = find_time_at_alt(-9,      sunset,      t1,       rising=False)

# ----------------------------

# RESULTS

# ----------------------------

print(f"--- Prayer Times for {day:02d}.{month:02d}.{year} ---")

print(f"Fajr (Imsak)  : {fajr.strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")

print(f"Sunrise       : {sunrise.utc_datetime().astimezone(tz).strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")

print(f"Dhuhr (Noon)  : {t_noon.utc_datetime().astimezone(tz).strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")

print(f"Asr           : {asr.strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")

print(f"Sunset        : {sunset.utc_datetime().astimezone(tz).strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")

print(f"Isha          : {isha.strftime('%H:%M:%S')}")
```

```
--- Prayer Times for 20.05.2026 ---
Fajr (Imsak)  : 05:07:04
Sunrise       : 05:54:54
Dhuhr (Noon)  : 13:05:10
Asr           : 16:57:11
Sunset        : 20:15:53
Isha          : 21:03:52

[Program finished]
```

In this calculation, the noon prayer is precisely fixed by the meridian transit, while Asr is derived from a formula based on the Sun's altitude at noon. The −9° below-horizon angle used for Imsak and Isha is the observational equivalent of fajr al-sadiq and evening twilight respectively.

Conclusion

Determining prayer times accurately is both a religious responsibility and a matter of scientific precision. The Quran grounds these times in observable natural phenomena; modern astronomy has given us the tools to calculate these phenomena with mathematical exactness. The Süleymaniye Foundation Calendar puts this approach into practice, bridging the Quranic definitions with astronomical data. What begins as understanding the Sun's position on the horizon plane evolves into a sophisticated science spanning solar declination calculations and binary search algorithms — ultimately producing both a scientific and Quranic answer to the most

fundamental question of daily worship: "What time should I pray?"

Returning to the Essence of Prayer: From Form to Spirit, From Mold to Consciousness

One of the most deep-rooted debates in Islamic history should have been not about how prayer is performed, but about what prayer means. Yet for centuries, the opposite process has unfolded: details such as where to hold one's hands, how many rak'ahs to perform, and which supplication to recite in which order have come so far to the fore that the spirit of worship has faded in the shadow of these disputes. Today, millions of Muslims perform prayer in its outward form, yet cannot feel in their lives the transformation promised in verse 45 of Surah Al-Ankabut — that is, keeping away from indecency and evil. This contradiction is a sign not of superficial practice, but of a deep lack of understanding. So what does the Quran actually say about prayer? And how do the social obstacles encountered today shape this act of worship?

The Purpose of Prayer: A Transformation, Not Merely a Ritual

The Quran defines prayer not as a checklist of duties, but as a dynamic process that transforms a person from within. Verse 45 of Surah Al-Ankabut is unmistakably clear on this: prayer is a force that keeps a person away from indecency and evil. This definition is highly significant, for it does not confine the effect of prayer to the prayer mat alone. A person who prays is expected to carry the imprint of that worship into their daily life — in their relationships, their honesty, and their sense of justice. If someone performs their prayers yet experiences no change in their life, this indicates that the worship has not moved beyond outward form. In verse 3 of Surah Al-Baqarah, when the qualities of the righteous are enumerated, prayer and spending for others are mentioned side by side. This pairing is no coincidence. In the Quran's view, worship and social conscience are two inseparable wholes. The hands that prostrate before God are also the hands that can reach out to those in need. The tongue that remembers God in prayer is the tongue that speaks truth in daily life.

The Framework Defined by the Quran: What Was Commanded, What Was Left Open?

The Quran has clearly established the fundamental elements of prayer: standing (qiyam), bowing (ruku'), and prostrating (sujud). In verse 77 of Surah Al-Hajj, the command is given to "bow down and prostrate"; in verse 19 of Surah Al-Alaq, "prostrate and draw near" is ordained. The condition of purity is explained in detail in verse 6 of Surah Al-Ma'idah. Turning toward the qiblah is commanded as a symbol of unity in verse 150 of Surah Al-Baqarah. What is striking, however, is this: the Quran does not regulate in detail how long these movements should last, in what sequence they should be repeated, which supplications should accompany them, or how many rak'ahs they should consist of. This silence is not a deficiency. It is a conscious flexibility and mercy that God has granted to His servants. The essence of worship should be sought not in the flawless imitation of specific forms, but in sincerity, in the purity of intention, and in a genuine turning toward God.

Number of Rak'ahs and Surahs to Be Recited: Tradition or Necessity?

According to widespread current practice, the morning prayer consists of two rak'ahs, the noon and afternoon prayers of four each, the evening prayer of three, and the night prayer of four. However, it should be noted that these numbers are not explicitly stipulated in the Quran. Verses 101–103 of Surah An-Nisa speak of a shortened form of prayer during a state of war, which shows that the number of rak'ahs can be flexible depending on circumstances. The number of rak'ahs established by the legal schools (madhabs) over the course of history are products of social consensus formed to provide order and unity in congregational worship. These arrangements are functional, but it is not correct to present them as definitive obligations of the Quran. Similarly, the Quran does not definitively specify which surah is to be recited during prayer. Surah Al-Fatiha has been practiced as a strong tradition over the centuries, but this stems from a practice shaped in the course of history, not from an explicit Quranic command. A person may recite Al-Fatiha, choose another surah, or remember God with words that come from the heart. What matters is that what is recited is understood and comes from the heart.

Conscious Worship: Prayer Performed Without Understanding

Perhaps the most critical dimension of prayer is the matter of consciousness. Verse 43 of Surah An-Nisa contains a very clear ruling: one should not approach prayer while intoxicated, not knowing what one is saying. This verse appears to point to a deeper truth: worship must be performed with full awareness. Today, many Muslims perform this act of worship without comprehending the meaning of the words they recite during prayer. Prayer performed without internalizing God's majesty while saying "Subhana Rabbiyal Azim" in ruku', or without feeling the depth of that submission while saying "Subhana Rabbiyal A'la" in sujud, is the clearest example of form overshadowing essence. At this point, verse 4 of Surah Ibrahim reminds us of an important principle: God sent every messenger in the language of their own people. The fundamental reason is clear: a message that is not understood cannot fulfill its transformative function. The same principle should be applied to prayer. Learning the meaning of the words recited in prayer, comprehending them deeply, and uttering each word while feeling it from the heart transforms prayer from a formal act into a spiritual experience.

Differences Between Madhabs: Richness or Conflict?

The Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali legal schools have adopted practices that differ from one another in some details of how prayer is performed. The raising of hands, the content of tashahhud supplications, where the hands are held during prayer, and the manner of giving salams are among the foremost of these differences. These differences are the natural and understandable products of a process. Each school developing its own interpretation within its own historical and geographical context is a sign of Islam's dialogue with different societies and cultures. However, presenting these practices as if they were definitive Quranic obligations, or declaring those who do otherwise to be in error, is clearly contrary to the spirit of the Quran. No school of jurisprudence can claim to be the sole possessor of absolute truth.

Women, Clothing, and Social Barriers

One of the most concrete current obstacles to prayer, particularly for women, is the imposition of dress codes. Today, in many mosques, women are forbidden from entering with uncovered heads or wearing trousers, and coverings of questionable hygiene are imposed upon them. As a result, many women give up performing prayer because they do not have traditional garments. Yet when the Quran is examined, no command is found stipulating a specific type of clothing for prayer. The verses concerning women's covering — verse 59 of Surah Al-Ahzab and verse 31 of Surah An-Nur — introduced the covering command not in the context of prayer, but with the aim of preserving modesty in social life and ensuring protection from harassment. In verse 26 of Surah Al-A'raf, the fundamental purpose of clothing is defined as covering and beautifying a person. Most importantly, the emphasis at the end of that verse is on "the garment of taqwa." Sincerity of heart and devotion to God are far more determinative than what covers the body. Verse 185 of Surah Al-Baqarah states plainly: "God intends ease for you, not hardship." Dress code impositions that conflict with this facilitating principle are contrary to the spirit of religion and drive people away from worship. Everyone should be able to turn to their Lord with whatever clothes they are wearing, with a pure heart and sincere intention.

Returning to the Essence of Prayer: What Question Should We Ask?

When the Quran's presentation of prayer is evaluated holistically, the following framework emerges: the fundamental movements have been established, the condition of purity has been commanded, and turning toward the qiblah has been ordained as a symbol of unity. However, the number of rak'ahs, the surahs to be recited, the supplications, and many other details have been left open. This openness is not a deficiency; it is a mercy that God has granted to His servants, allowing them to personalize worship and preserve their sincerity. The greatest question before Muslims today is this: we are performing prayer — but is prayer changing us? Are we experiencing the protection promised by Surah Al-Ankabut? Are we living a life free from indecency and evil? If the answer is no, the problem does not lie in the number of rak'ahs, where the hands are held, or which supplication is recited. The problem is a disconnection from the essence of worship.

Prayer Carried from the Prayer Mat into Life

Prayer is not the worship of numbers, molds, and traditional coverings. It is the worship of a heart turned toward God and an awakened mind. Completing the outward form does not fulfill the purpose; consciousness carries meaning even in the absence of form. In verse 22 of Surah Az-Zumar, God speaks of a person whose chest has been opened to Islam and who walks upon a light from their Lord. This light shines within not the person who merely performs certain movements, but the person who has grasped the essence of prayer and lives it as a state of consciousness and awakening. Prayer guides us to live in peace not only with God, but also with ourselves and with society. And the place where this peace begins is not the few minutes spent on the prayer mat, but the conscious life lived after rising from it.

Prayer Times in the Light of the Quran

Prayer (salat) is one of the central acts of worship in Islam, occupying a pivotal place in the daily life of Muslims. However, the times of prayer, their obligatory nature, and the question of making up missed prayers (qada) remain among the most debated topics in the Islamic world.

1. Prayer Times in the Quran: How Many Times Are Obligatory?

Surah Hud, Verse 114

One of the most foundational verses regarding prayer times is Hud 11:114:

"And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with evil deeds. This is a reminder for those who remember."

This verse commands prayer at the two ends of the day and near the night. In Quranic Arabic, "night" encompasses the period from sunset to sunrise. The two ends of the day correspond to the times of the morning and evening prayers. The conjunction "and" in the verse indicates that these times form a complementary whole.

Surah Al-Isra, Verse 78

"Establish prayer from the declining of the sun until the darkness of the night, and the Quran of dawn — indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed."

This verse clearly expresses the time of the evening prayer, pointing to the period stretching from the sun's westward decline to the darkening of the night.

Surah An-Nur, Verse 58

"O you who have believed, let those whom your right hands possess and those who have not yet reached puberty among you ask permission of you at three times: before the morning prayer, at midday when you put aside your clothing, and after the evening prayer..."

This verse is directly related to prayer times. It refers to three distinct periods: before the morning prayer, during the midday rest, and after the evening prayer. While the context concerns privacy and intimate moments, the references to prayer times within it demonstrate that these times played a defining role in social life.

When the Quranic verses on prayer times are examined, it is evident that the morning and evening prayers are explicitly mentioned.

2. Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 238 and the Concept of "Salat al-Wusta"

Baqarah 2:238 is one of the fundamental reference points regarding prayer:

"Maintain with care the prayers and [in particular] the best prayer, and stand before Allah in devout obedience."

In the Quranic context, the word wusta carries meanings such as "the most superior," "the most virtuous," and "the most valued." Notably, in Baqarah 2:143, Muslims are described as ummat-an wasatan — a phrase best understood not as "a middle community" but as "the most excellent, distinguished community." Therefore, translating salat al-wusta as "the middle prayer" is linguistically less accurate than rendering it as "the most virtuous prayer."

In this context, some early scholars — most notably Abu al-Hasan — argued that salat al-wusta refers to the Friday prayer (Jumu'ah). According to this interpretation, the Friday prayer is not merely one of the daily prayers but a special act of worship with its own distinct importance, a social function, and a unique spiritual weight.

3. The Historical and Conceptual Foundations of Friday Prayer

The Etymology of "Jumu'ah"

The word Jumu'ah (Friday) derives from the Arabic root J-M-A, meaning "to gather" or "to come together." It is pronounced Cumua in Kurdish, and similar derivatives exist in various Arabic dialects. In the pre-Islamic period, Arabs referred to this day as Yawm al-'Aruba ("the Day of Aruba"). It was later renamed Yawm al-Jumu'ah — "the Day of Gathering."

The Days of the Week Before Islam

In pre-Islamic Arab society, the days of the week were named as follows:

| Day | Pre-Islamic Name |

|-----|----------------|

| Sunday | Awwal |

| Monday | Ahwan |

| Tuesday | Jubar |

| Wednesday | Dubar |

| Thursday | Munis |

| Friday | Aruba |

| Saturday | Siyar |

Historical sources are inconclusive as to whether this naming was changed by Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy of the Quraysh tribe or by another figure. However, it is understood that the change was connected to the markets established in Medina, and that setting the gathering day to coincide with market day was intended to increase participation.

The First Friday Prayer: A Historical Perspective

The first Friday prayer was performed by the Muslims of Medina before the Prophet Muhammad migrated there. According to a narration by Ibn Sirin, the Muslims of

Medina, observing that Jews gathered on Saturday and Christians on Sunday, decided to designate their own day of assembly. A group of twelve people, led by As'ad ibn Zurara, performed the first Friday prayer and named the day "Jumu'ah."

Before his migration to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad had sent Mus'ab ibn Umayr to teach Islam to the Medinans. Mus'ab gathered the Medinan Muslims and led the first formal Friday prayer, a practice that continued until the Prophet's arrival in Medina.

Must Friday Prayer Be Fixed to a Specific Day?

When historical data is examined, it becomes clear that fixing the Friday prayer to a specific day was entirely based on social and practical considerations. The early Muslims of Medina found the sixth day of the week — when the market was held — convenient for gathering, and this preference gradually became a tradition. However, this choice was not an immutable rule explicitly commanded by God, but rather a functional practice shaped by the needs of the community.

On this basis, it can be argued that contemporary Muslims performing this congregational prayer on a different day that suits their own circumstances and social reality is not contrary to the spirit of Islam. For the primary purpose of the Friday prayer is to strengthen social solidarity, to remember Allah together, and to keep the sense of community alive.

Friday Prayer in the Quran

Surah Al-Jumu'ah, verse 9, is the clearest Quranic reference to the importance of this act of worship:

"O you who have believed, when the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew."

This verse emphasizes that the Friday prayer is both an individual and a communal act of worship, and clearly states that worldly preoccupations must not take precedence over it. Furthermore, it is understood from the wording that this call is directed not only at men but at all believers — which implies that Friday prayer is obligatory for women as well.

4. The Question of Making Up Missed Prayers: What Does the Quran Say?

Prayer as a Time-Bound Act of Worship

The Quran clearly establishes that prayer must be performed at specific times. Surah An-Nisa, verse 103 states: "Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times." Prayer is thus prescribed for believers at defined times. Surah Al-Ma'arij, verse 23 also praises those believers who are constant in their prayers.

These verses make plain that prayer is a time-bound act of worship and that adhering to its appointed times is obligatory. The Quran further provides that prayer cannot be

abandoned even in difficult circumstances. In Nisa 4:101–102, it is stated that even in conditions as extreme as warfare, prayer may be shortened but not abandoned — a clear testament to prayer's indispensable place in a Muslim's life.

The Absence of Qada in the Quran

There is no explicit ruling in the Quran regarding making up missed prayers. The concept of qada (compensatory prayer) does not appear directly in the Quranic text. Among acts of worship, fasting is the one whose make-up (qada) is explicitly mandated: Baqarah 2:184–185 commands that fasts missed due to illness or travel must be made up later. No such provision exists for prayer in the Quran.

Considering this difference: Allah explicitly commanded the make-up of fasting in the Quran but did not do so for prayer. This distinction appears deliberate and suggests that performing prayer within its appointed time is the fundamental requirement.

Hadith Narrations and the Quran-Centered Approach

Certain hadith narrations contain statements suggesting that prayers whose time has passed should be made up. However, for a religious ruling to be valid, it must be clearly present in the Quran, which is a self-sufficient source on its own. Several verses support this position:

- Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 44 emphasizes that people are responsible solely for what is in the Quran.

- Surah Al-An'am, verses 114–115 state that Allah's Book is complete and an all-encompassing guide.

- Surah Al-Qiyamah, verse 19 states that Allah Himself has explained the Quran.

The Ruling on Missing Prayer

Abandoning prayer without a valid excuse is contrary to the general spirit of the Quran and creates a moral responsibility for the believer. However, there is no explicit Quranic ruling that making up a missed prayer after its time has passed is obligatory. A Quran-centered reading suggests that prayer carries its obligatory character only when performed within its designated time.

Conclusion

Several key conclusions can be drawn:

Regarding prayer times, the Quran explicitly mentions the morning and evening prayers, while containing indirect allusions to other times. A Quran-centered approach regards these two times as the core obligatory prayers, while treating the other times as an extension of Allah's mercy and latitude granted to believers.

Friday prayer is a communal act of worship to which the Quran assigns special importance. The concept of salat al-wusta may be interpreted as a designation expressing that this prayer is more virtuous than the others. That the Friday prayer

must be fixed specifically to Friday is a historical social convention rather than a religious obligation.

On the question of making up missed prayers, there is no explicit Quranic ruling. The primary responsibility of believers is to perform their prayers on time and with care. Allah asks of us only compliance with the rulings set forth in the Quran; adding obligations to the religion that are not present in His Book is contrary to the spirit of the Quran.

There Is No Funeral Prayer

One of the fundamental concepts of Islam, "salât," is generally understood in traditional Islam as "prayer" (namaz), but in the Quran it carries different meanings in different contexts. In Surah At-Tawbah, verse 84, Allah states:

> "And do not perform salât over any of them who dies, ever, or stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were defiantly disobedient."

In this verse, the expression "to perform salât" is used not in the sense commonly known as "prayer" (namaz), but rather in the sense of supplication (dua). Allah informed our Prophet Muhammad that he should not make supplication for the hypocrites who died at that time, nor should he stand at their graves. The verse states that these individuals did not accept Islam and denied Allah and His Messenger, and because they died in a state of wickedness (fisq), Allah commanded that His mercy and forgiveness not be sought on their behalf.

In Islam, supplication — turning to Allah, seeking His help and forgiveness — is an important part of a believer's life. The expression "to perform salât" also reminds our Prophet Muhammad and his community of their duty to pray to Allah and seek His mercy. However, the usage in this verse draws attention to the conditions of supplication. Muslims should not make supplication for those who do not believe and who reject Islam.

In this context, "to perform salât" refers not only to praying for a person after their death, but also to the necessity of paying attention to that person's state of disbelief and corruption during their lifetime. This situation points to the importance not only of supplication after death, but also of the beliefs people hold throughout their lives. The Prophet Muhammad was commanded not to stand for those who did not believe and who had rebelled against Allah, because their disbelief constitutes an obstacle to Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

In Islam, supplication is also a search for consolation and mercy. However, this supplication must carry meaning — it must be performed with sincere faith and submission to Allah. When Muslims make supplication, they are sincerely seeking true forgiveness and mercy from Allah. The prohibition of "salât" in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 84, also points to the futility of supplicating for those who did not believe, without knowledge of their condition in the Hereafter.

According to Islam, supplication only carries meaning for those who are on the right

path and who have submitted to Allah. Although the word "salât" in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 84, is traditionally understood in Islam as the "funeral prayer," there is no funeral prayer in Islam. And in the verse as well, it is used in the meaning of supplication (dua), not prayer (namaz).

The Prophet Muhammad was commanded not to make supplication for those who did not believe, because their rebellion against Allah and their dying in a state of corruption prevents their forgiveness. This verse provides an important clue for understanding the culture of supplication in Islam and the conditions under which supplication is made.

In conclusion, there is no funeral prayer. The act of "performing salât" in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 84, means making supplication (dua). Supplication is an act of worship performed with sincere faith and submission, and it only carries meaning for those who are on the right path.

The Evaluation of Tarawih Prayer and Hadiths

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to serve Me.”

In Islam, the sole source of acts of worship is the Quran. In narrations, the reason given for the Prophet's abandonment of leading the Tarawih prayer is expressed as his fear that this prayer might become obligatory. However, from a Quranic perspective, it is inconceivable that a messenger would object to or feel fear regarding Allah's ruling on acts of worship. Because:

Allah consults no one when making rulings: "And He shares His governance with no one." (Al-Kahf 18:26)

The Messenger submits wholeheartedly to Allah's ruling: "Indeed, Allah commands what He wills." (Al-Ma'idah 5:1)

A messenger does not shy away from Allah's command — on the contrary, he is the exemplary person who fulfills it completely. For this reason, the claim that the Prophet acted out of fear or hesitation contradicts both the Quranic verses and the mission of messengers.

The Quran explains the act of prayer in detail, yet contains no information regarding Tarawih prayer. The Prophet only conveyed and practiced the acts of worship declared in the Quran:

> "I only follow what is revealed to me." (Al-An'am 6:50)

> "And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord." (Al-Ahzab 33:2)

Tarawih prayer is a practice outside the daily prayers specified in the Quran, and since it is not found in the Quran, claims that the Prophet performed it are debatable.

Contradictions in the Hadiths

The hadiths contain conflicting accounts regarding Tarawih prayer — it is narrated

that it was performed as:

- 11 rak'ahs

- 13 rak'ahs

- 23 rak'ahs

This situation demonstrates that it was not a standardized practice of worship. Furthermore, differences among the legal schools also open to debate whether this prayer qualifies as Sunnah. According to the Shafi'i school, it is not considered appropriate for a person who owes makeup prayers to perform voluntary prayers, whereas the Hanafi school places emphasis on Tarawih prayer.

Inconsistencies in the Diyanet's Practices

The practices of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) have also been subject to criticism. For example:

- Beard: According to the Hanafi school, the length of the beard must be at least four fingers. However, the beard of the President of Diyanet does not conform to this measure.

- Turban and robe: According to the Sunnah, the back of the turban should be five fingers in length and the robe should be plain. However, today expensive garments that do not meet these criteria are preferred.

This situation reveals the inconsistencies in the schools' understanding of the Sunnah and the contradictions in their practices.

Conclusion

The source of Islam is the Quran. The Prophet is the implementer of the Quran and adheres to Allah's revelation. The narrations regarding Tarawih prayer reflect a situation that contradicts the rulings in the Quran and the mission of the Messenger. For this reason:

- In acts of worship, only the commands found in the Quran should be taken into consideration.

- Rather than making rulings based on contradictory narrations filled with inter-school differences, the guidance of the Quran should be taken as the foundation.

> "We have not neglected in the Register a single thing." (Al-An'am 6:38)

This verse demonstrates that the Quran — the source of Islam — contains all the knowledge necessary for servitude. Revisiting practices outside the Quran is necessary for a return to the essence of Islam.

The Meaning of Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab

While the Quran regulates the relationships of believers with Allah, the Prophet, and

one another, it also conveys profound messages about social and religious values. In this context, verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab specifically raises the issue of sending salat and salam upon the Prophet. Although the verse is widely understood as "sending salawat," subjecting these interpretations to a thorough examination can help clarify the true meaning of the verse more precisely.

Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab reads: "Indeed, Allah and His angels support the Prophet. O you who believe! You too support him and greet him with full submission." (Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 56.) The text of this verse states that Allah and His angels support the Prophet, and that believers must likewise support him. Here, the words "salat" and "salam" are generally used in the senses of support, prayer, and greeting, though their usage in this verse carries a deeper meaning. The verse emphasizes that believers must stand in support of the Prophet.

The word "salat" on which the verse focuses derives etymologically from Arabic roots meaning "support," "prayer," "sending greetings," or "showing respect." Before Islam, this word was used among Arabs to mean wishing someone well and showing them respect. Furthermore, the expression in the verse, "wa sallimū taslīmā", means "greet him with full submission." The word "salam" here carries the meanings of assuring a person, wishing them peace and tranquility. In Arabic, the verb "sallama" means "to greet" or "to make safe," while the word "taslīm" means "complete submission" or "to surrender oneself entirely." This usage is an expression of submission to Allah. The verse asks believers to support the Prophet, to keep him in peace and tranquility, and to submit to him completely.

In the pre-Islamic Arab society, greeting was an important social norm. Arabs used greeting as an expression of trust and peace. This tradition was carried over into Islam, and the greeting continued as a symbol of peace and trust in social relations. In Islam, greeting is not merely an individual social practice; it also carries a deep religious meaning in the sense of submission to Allah and showing respect to others.

Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab is most commonly understood to mean "reciting salawat." However, a thorough examination of this verse reveals that it essentially states that Allah and His angels support the Prophet, and that believers must similarly support him. The word "salat" here is not used in the sense of making a prayer, but rather in the sense of a person providing social, psychological, and spiritual support to another and helping them. Just as Allah and the angels support the Prophet, believers are likewise required to support him.

Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab has no connection whatsoever to the recitation of salawat. The true message of the verse is that believers must support the Prophet in a spiritual and social sense. A deeper understanding of the meanings of the words "salat" and "salam" reveals that this verse is a call emphasizing solidarity and unity within the Islamic community. Following the support that Allah and His angels extend to the Prophet, believers must support him with complete submission and trust.

Therefore, the correct translation of the verse is as follows: "Indeed, Allah and His angels support the Prophet. O you who believe! You too support him and greet him with full submission." (Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 56.)

Hajj According to the Quran and the Sacred Months

The Place of Sacred Months in the Quran

The Quran clearly states that four of the twelve months of the year are "sacred months" (haram months). Surah At-Tawbah, verse 36, states:

> "Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the register of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allah is with the righteous."

The first notable point in this verse is that while the number of sacred months is clearly given, the specific months are not named. The Quran does not identify them by name. Traditional Islamic literature has designated these four months as Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qa'dah, and Dhul-Hijjah, but this information is based on hadith sources and cannot be directly derived from the Quranic text. Recognizing this fundamental distinction is essential for a Quran-centered reading.

The primary function of the sacred months is defined in the Quran along two axes: the prohibition of warfare and the guarantee of access to the Masjid al-Haram. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 217, addresses both dimensions together:

> "They ask you about the sacred month — about fighting therein. Say: Fighting therein is great sin, but averting people from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and the Masjid al-Haram and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater in the sight of Allah..."

This verse, while establishing that fighting during sacred months is a great sin, emphasizes that preventing access to the Masjid al-Haram is an even greater transgression. Thus, the sacred months are not merely a period of "war prohibition" — they are also a time that safeguards religious freedom and access to the Masjid al-Haram.

Hajj Taking Place During the "Known Months"

The most critical verse regarding the timing of Hajj is Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 197:

> "Hajj is during well-known months. So whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein, there is to be no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj..."

The phrase "well-known months" (ashurun ma'lumat) is of great importance. The verse shows that Hajj is not confined to a single day or a single month, but may be performed throughout the plural "well-known months." The plural form of this expression is not coincidental. If Hajj were restricted to only the 8th–13th days of Dhul-Hijjah, the Quran would have used the singular "in a well-known month." The plural mention of months indicates that the timeframe for Hajj is far broader than commonly assumed. A further supporting verse is Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 189:

> "They ask you about the new moons. Say: They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj..."

This verse establishes that new moons serve as the basis for determining the time of Hajj. The association of Hajj timing with new moons in the plural — rather than a single moon — reinforces the idea that the act of worship can extend across more than one month.

Pilgrims Coming from Distant Lands and the Question of Time

Another important evidence that Hajj should be spread over a wide timeframe is found in Surah Al-Hajj, verse 27:

> "And proclaim to the people the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass."

This verse makes clear that the call to Hajj is directed not only to those nearby but also to people coming from distant lands. The phrase "from every distant pass" emphasizes that geographical obstacles and long journeys do not prevent Hajj. In an era without motorized transport or aviation, reaching Mecca from different corners of the world could take months. Had Hajj been confined to just a few days, the vast majority of such people would have had no opportunity to fulfill their worship. This would be clearly contrary to the spirit of the Quran, for Allah states in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 185:

> "...Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship..."

Compressing Hajj into a narrow timeframe in which millions of people converge on one place simultaneously is incompatible with this principle of ease.

The Connection Between Sacred Months and Hajj

Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 2, illuminates the organic relationship between the sacred months and Hajj in a remarkably clear way:

> "O you who have believed, do not violate the rites of Allah or the sacred month or the sacrificial animals and the garlanded or those coming to the Sacred House seeking bounty from their Lord and His approval..."

In this verse, the sacred month, those coming to the Kaaba, and the offerings presented are mentioned together. This co-mention reveals that the sacred months are directly connected to the act of Hajj. The sacred months are periods that provide both safe travel guarantees and freedom of worship for those who intend to visit the Kaaba. Evaluating these two elements independently of each other undermines the holistic message of the Quran.

The Essentials of Hajj in the Quran

The Quran has laid down the foundational principles for how Hajj is to be performed. When these principles are examined, it becomes evident that Hajj is an act of pure submission and piety:

Moral discipline: Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 197, states that indecent conduct, wickedness, and quarreling are forbidden during Hajj. Hajj is not merely a physical journey but a process of purifying the soul and drawing closer to Allah.

Safa and Marwa: Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 158, identifies these two hills as signs of Allah and states that there is no fault in those performing Hajj or Umrah walking between them.

Ihram and expiation: Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 196, explains how expiation is to be paid in the event of illness or hardship during the state of ihram, and how Hajj and Umrah may be combined or performed separately. This detailed regulation shows that the Quran is attentive to the practical dimensions of worship.

Looking at these verses, it is clear that the Quran does not reduce Hajj to the mechanical performance of specific rituals. On the contrary, Hajj is a concrete expression of submission to Allah, moral purification, and communal solidarity.

Testing Traditional Practices Against the Quran

When traditional Hajj practices are examined, it is striking that many rituals with no basis in the Quran have been brought to the forefront — most notably kissing the Black Stone, the stoning of the devil ritual, and the compression of Hajj into specific days of Dhul-Hijjah. Presenting these rituals as constituting the essence of worship is problematic from the Quranic perspective. The core elements the Quran emphasizes regarding Hajj are: submission to the oneness of Allah, respect for the sacred months, free access to the Masjid al-Haram, and the maintenance of peace and moral discipline throughout. The Quran has built Hajj upon these foundational values. The physical veneration of any stone or site carries the potential to conflict with the Quran's emphasis on tawhid (monotheism).

The Importance of Hajj Being Spread Over a Wide Timeframe

The interpretation that Hajj may be performed throughout the "well-known months" has profoundly important practical consequences. Today, millions of Muslims face the dangers of overcrowding, security risks, and economic hardship caused by being compressed into a narrow window of time. Had the broad timeframe envisioned by the Quran been put into practice:

- This act of worship would be accessible to a greater number of Muslims.

- People coming from distant lands could spread their journeys over a reasonable period.

- The security risks created by overcrowding would be substantially reduced.

- The economic burden would be distributed more equitably.

Viewed from this perspective, the Quranic provisions on Hajj serve not only as a religious guide but also as a pursuit of social and humanitarian ease.

Conclusion

The Quran addresses Hajj and the sacred months in a clear and holistic manner. The sacred months are periods during which warfare is forbidden, access to the Masjid al-Haram is guaranteed, and freedom of worship is protected. Hajj, in turn, is a comprehensive act of worship that may be performed throughout the "well-known months" that overlap with these sacred months. The movement of the moon is the natural measure of Hajj time, and it is an explicit command of the Quran that even those coming from distant lands should be able to perform this worship with ease.

Allah's Book was sent to make acts of worship accessible to humanity. Hajj, too, was ordained to be one of the most beautiful manifestations of this principle of ease. Rather than confining it to narrow molds, reading it through the broad perspective of the Quran is of vital importance — both for individual worship and for the well-being of the Muslim community as a whole.

Eid al-Adha and the Act of Sacrifice

Validity Conditions of Worship According to the Quran

One of the most deep-rooted debates in the Islamic world, continuing for centuries, concerns which acts of worship are grounded in the Quran and which were incorporated into religious life later through hadith and narration culture.

In a Quran-centered approach, for a religious practice to be considered an act of worship, two fundamental conditions must be met. First, the act must be defined by a clear and firm (muhkam) verse in the Quran. Second, how to perform it must also be described with equal clarity in the Quran. The absence of either condition renders the practice invalid as a religious obligation from a Quranic perspective. The Quran explicitly declares itself to be a complete guide: "We have neglected nothing in the Book." (An'am 38). This principle makes the question of whether practices like animal sacrifice and Eid al-Adha rest on a firm Quranic ruling critically important.

The Surah Al-Kawthar and the Problem of Traditional Interpretation

One of the primary sources traditionalists cite for the act of sacrifice is Surah Al-Kawthar. The commonly accepted translation reads: "Indeed, We have granted you Al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off." However, to question the accuracy of this translation, one must jointly evaluate the context of the surah's revelation, the conditions of the era, and the linguistic content of its key words.

Surah Al-Kawthar is the fifteenth in the order of revelation and among the earliest surahs revealed in Mecca. The early years of Islam were a period when the belief in monotheism was just being established and the Prophet Muhammad was struggling against severe pressure and slander. In this period, the core content of revelation was the oneness of God, consolation for the messenger, and a call to faith. Revealing legal rulings in such an environment — where belief had not yet taken root — would mean imposing obligations before the faith was firmly established, which contradicts the Quran's general pedagogical method.

The Word "Kawthar"

Kawthar is derived in Arabic from the faw'al pattern, formed with the kathrah template, meaning "extremely abundant, very plentiful." Traditionalists interpret this word as a river in paradise. However, looking at the Surahs Ad-Duha and Ash-Sharh, which were revealed before Al-Kawthar, we see that the blessings given to the messenger are listed concretely: being sheltered when an orphan, being guided when astray, being enriched when poor, receiving revelation, the expansion of the chest, the lifting of burden, the exaltation of name. Kawthar is the totality of all these abundant blessings — not a river in paradise.

The Word "Salât"

Recorded in Arabic dictionaries as carrying 18 different meanings, the word salât is translated by traditionalists solely as "prayer" (namaz). Yet the word has a rich range of meanings: to pray, to support, to exalt, to protect, to deliver a speech. Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ahzab illustrates this point strikingly: "Indeed, Allah and His angels send salât upon the Prophet." If salât meant only ritual prayer, this would produce the fundamentally erroneous meaning that God and the angels perform ritual prayer for the Prophet. In this verse, salât clearly means offering support and help. Therefore, when God commands the messenger to perform salât, He is asking not merely for ritual prayer, but for supplication, for supporting and exalting Islam, and for strengthening the believers.

The Word "Wanhar"

The word on which the claim that the surah contains a command to sacrifice rests is wanhar — the imperative form of the verb nahara. Traditionalists translate this word directly as "sacrifice an animal." However, the word's meanings in Arabic dictionaries span a very broad range: to stand upright, to turn the body toward the qibla, to place the hands on the chest, to face straight ahead without turning left or right, to stand firm, to not submit to the desires of the self. The word's most widely used meaning as a verbal noun is "to face, to confront breast to breast." The conditions of the period of revelation and the surah's general context strengthen this interpretation: the Prophet Muhammad was facing severe pressure from society and was being belittled as "cut off" due to the death of his son. In this surah, God was consoling the messenger, supporting him, and commanding him to stand firm against hardships. A command to slaughter an animal is incongruent with this context.

Within this framework, the correct translation of Surah Al-Kawthar should be: "Indeed, We have given you abundant blessings. So perform salât for your Lord and stand firm against the hardships you will face! Indeed, it is the one who degrades you who is truly cut off."

The Use of the Word "Sacrifice" in Translations: A Linguistic Problem

When the verses associated with the act of sacrifice in the Quran are examined, it becomes clear that the Arabic word "kurban" (sacrifice) does not appear at all in the original Arabic of these verses. Traditionalist commentators translate eight different Arabic words — nüsük, mensek, hedy, zibh, nahr, udhiye, and others — all as "sacrifice," thereby constructing a worship practice and its obligation that does not

exist in the Quran.

One of the fundamental principles of linguistics and semantics is: different words point to different meanings. To ignore this principle and reduce eight words that are distinct in meaning and root to a single concept is a serious methodological error.

Looking at concrete examples, the picture becomes even clearer. The word hedy in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 196 means "to guide, to gift, to send" in the dictionary and should correctly be rendered as "send whatever gift is easy for you"; yet in traditionalist translations it is given as "sacrifice." The same word hedy appears in Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 95 and suffers the same distortion. In Al-Ma'idah 97 and in verses 28 and 36 of Surah Al-Hajj, the same situation occurs; words like bahîmati'l-an'âm — meaning the plural of animals such as camels, cattle, and sheep — are translated directly as "sacrificial animals."

The Inconsistency of the Schools of Jurisprudence: An Admission of the Absence of Quranic Proof

The fact that traditionalist circles adopt different rulings across jurisprudential schools on the matter of animal sacrifice is an indirect acknowledgment that this act of worship lacks a solid foundation in the Quran. According to the Shafi'i school, sacrifice is not obligatory (fard); Shafi'i scholars interpreted the word *wanhar* not as slaughtering an animal but as raising the hands to the chest during prayer. In the Hanafi school, sacrifice is considered wajib (necessary), while in the Maliki and Hanbali schools it is regarded as sunnah. This profound disagreement clearly shows that the jurisprudential rulings of the schools are fed not by the Quran but by narration culture, and that it is not possible to derive a definitive and binding ruling from the Quran on this matter.

Indeed, even a deeply rooted traditionalist commentator like Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi noted that restricting the word mensek in Surah Al-Hajj verse 67 solely to sacrifice is not correct. According to Razi, mensek is a broad concept that can refer to any act of worship.

The True Meaning of "Sacrifice" (Kurban) in the Quran

The word kurban derives in Arabic from the root k-r-b, meaning "to approach, to be near," and encompasses every type of deed performed to draw closer to God. Traditionalists, under the influence of hadith culture, have reduced this concept solely to the act of "slaughtering an animal." Yet this narrowing damages the word's original richness of meaning and the Quran's holistic message. Every act of worship, every righteous deed, every act of self-sacrifice performed to draw closer to God can be considered a kurban in this sense.

Eid al-Adha and the Eid Prayer: Are They in the Quran?

Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr are not mentioned in the Quran. Per the Quran's fundamental principle, if an act of worship has been made obligatory by God, both its definition and the manner of its performance must be clearly stated in the Quran. Within this framework, no practice that is not established by a firm Quranic verse —

such as the Eid al-Adha prayer, kandil nights, and similar observances — can be accepted as a religious obligation.

God did not grant the messenger authority to establish rulings in the name of religion. "I only follow what is revealed to me." (An'am 50) and "Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord." (Al-Ahzab 2) — these verses confirm this truth. Consequently, the jurisprudential rulings based on hadith and narration culture have no binding force from a Quranic standpoint.

The Social Dimension: Worship of Uncertain Origin vs. Genuine Solidarity

Traditionalists sometimes draw attention to the social dimension of the practice of sacrifice, arguing that the poor are able to eat meat. However, this argument is self-contradictory. This understanding of "generosity," recalled only once a year, is incompatible with the Quran's vision of continuous and systematic social justice. If the Quran's economic and social rulings were genuinely applied to social life, the poor would be able to meet their basic needs every day of the year.

Furthermore, in many Muslim societies — particularly in Anatolia — it is observed that people take interest-bearing loans from banks and then proceed to slaughter a sacrifice, all without knowledge of Quranic rulings. Interest is explicitly prohibited in the Quran. In this case, committing a forbidden act for the sake of a practice that is neither obligatory nor established as sunnah is a deeply troubling contradiction.

Conclusion

The act of animal sacrifice and Eid al-Adha have not been defined by a firm Quranic verse, nor has the manner of their performance been clearly described. The words translated as "sacrifice" consist of eight distinct Arabic words with different meanings in their original; the principles of linguistics and semantics demonstrate that these words cannot be reduced to a single ruling of "slaughter an animal." The context of Surah Al-Kawthar's revelation, the conditions of the era, and the broad semantic ranges of its key words all indicate that the surah contains not a command to sacrifice, but a call to stand firm against hardships and to support Islam. The disagreements among jurisprudential schools on this matter are clear evidence that the practice cannot be grounded on firm Quranic proof.

"And do not say, regarding what your tongues falsely describe: 'This is lawful and this is forbidden,' so that you invent lies against God." (An-Nahl 116)

The Quran is a complete and sufficient guide for believers. "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them?" (Al-'Ankabut 51)

This call places before us, in every age and every generation, the responsibility to rebuild religious life centered on the Quran.

Fate, Time, and Consciousness: An Essay at the Intersection of the Quran, Neuroscience, and Physics

The Question of Distortion: Meaning or Interpretation?

When it comes to understanding the Quran, the interpretations that translators silently embed within the text pose a serious danger. Verse 13 of Surah Al-Isra is a striking example of this.

The original verse reads: "We have fastened every man's bird to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall bring forth a book which he will find spread open. 'Read your book; your own self suffices you this day as a reckoner against you.'" (Al-Isra 13–14)

In certain translations and commentaries, this verse has been rendered as something like: "We have made everyone's fate contingent upon their own striving." Yet this is not translation — it is ideological intervention. The word tā'ir in the verse means "bird," and the bird is tied to the neck; wherever the person goes, the bird is there, the record is in pursuit. On the Day of Judgment that person's book will be brought forth, and their own self will hold them to account. There is no mechanism of "earning" based on human will here; everything has been written in advance, the ink has dried, and what the pen wrote has been completed.

Similarly, the verb yashā'u, which recurs throughout the Quran, carries a clear grammatical meaning. Derived from the root letters shin-ya-hamza, this verb in the third-person singular masculine present tense means "He wills," and the subject of the verb, depending on context, refers to God. Translating it as "whoever deserves" or "whoever wills (it for themselves)" is to import a meaning from outside the text. In Surah Al-Qasas 56, this is absolutely clear: "Indeed, you do not guide whom you love, but God guides whom He wills." Even the Prophet Muhammad could not guide those he loved to the right path. That the one who wills is God is beyond dispute — grammatically, semantically, and theologically.

The Testimony of Physics: The Absence of an Absolute "Now"

Modern physics' understanding of time stands in sharp contradiction to our intuitive, everyday experience. Einstein's special theory of relativity fundamentally demolished Newton's picture of absolute and universal time. Simultaneity is relative; an event that appears to occur at the same moment for two observers may appear to occur at different moments for two other observers moving at different velocities. There is no universal, objective "now."

According to the block universe interpretation, past, present, and future are not ontologically distinct from one another; time is a dimension like space, and all events exist with equal reality within this four-dimensional structure. The "flow of time," under this interpretation, is not an objective reality but a subjective illusion.

Within this framework, a critical question arises: if physics allows no absolute "now," where does the "now" experienced by consciousness come from? The answer comes from neuroscience: consciousness does not directly represent physical time — it reconstructs it. The experience of time is not a reflection of an ontological reality, but a cognitive production.

The Quranic counterpart of this distinction is profoundly meaningful. In Surah Al-

Hadid 22, it is stated: "No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We bring it into existence." The concept of the Lawh al-Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet) carries an epistemological parallel with the block universe interpretation: past, present, and future exist simultaneously within God's knowledge. In Surah Al-Hajj 47, it is declared: "A day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning." Time is the mode of experience belonging to created beings; it is not an ontological necessity for the divine essence.

From Libet to the Quran: The Illusion of Will

In 1980, neuroscientist Benjamin Libet conducted experiments that turned the debate on free will upside down. The findings can be summarized as follows: the EEG activity in the motor cortex known as the "readiness potential" begins 350 to 500 milliseconds before subjects report their conscious sense of "deciding," while the physical movement occurs approximately 200 milliseconds after this conscious intention. In other words, the brain has already set itself in motion long before the person says "I have now decided to move."

The conclusion is striking: the feeling of "deciding" is not the cause of the action, but a retrospective explanation the brain appends to that action. Consciousness does not produce a decision; it labels an already-produced action as "I did it."

This finding is in deep harmony with several Quranic verses. In Surah Al-A'raf 188: "Say: I hold not for myself any harm or benefit except what God wills." And in Surah Al -Insan 30: "But you cannot will unless God wills. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Wise." Even the Prophet Muhammad could not choose. The real agent of the experience of "willing" is God; consciousness merely labels the action God created with "I wanted it."

Surah Al-Anfal 17 expresses this most powerfully: "It was not you who slew them, but God slew them. And you threw not when you threw, but God threw." The believer shoots the arrow, the enemy falls, and consciousness says "I killed." Yet the true agent is God. The feeling of will is nothing more than the temporal tag that consciousness attaches to the action God has created.

The Brain Does Not Record Reality; It Narrativizes It

The Libet experiments are not limited to motor actions. All perceptual processes involve similar delays. Visual stimuli travel from the retina to the visual cortex in 150–300 milliseconds; comparable delays apply to auditory and tactile stimuli. Consciousness is not real-time; it is a delayed system that labels the past as "now."

In the flash-lag effect experiment, when a flashing light is presented simultaneously with a moving ball, observers report that the light lags behind the ball — even though physically the two are at the same location. The brain predicts the future position of the moving object and presents this prediction to the perceiver as "now." "Now" is not a representation of the physical instant, but of the brain's prediction.

In the color phi phenomenon, two differently colored dots flash in sequence; the observer perceives a motion and color transition between them that does not

actually exist. The brain takes two separate events and inserts a transitional narrative between them.

In the cutaneous rabbit illusion, when the wrist is tapped twice and the elbow once, the observer feels the taps progressing evenly along the arm — even though the physical stimuli are at different locations.

All of these phenomena point to a single conclusion: the brain does not record what happens — it narrativizes what happens.

In Surah Fussilat 21, it is mentioned that the skin will be made to speak on the Day of Judgment, and it is stated: "God has made us speak." The person being spoken about experiences it as though they themselves are speaking; yet the one who creates the speech is God. Consciousness is appending a retrospective "I did it" narrative to the action God has created.

The Deceptive Width of "Now"

William James' concept of the specious present reveals that the subjective "now" is not a point but an interval of approximately 2–3 seconds. Its neural correlate is theta waves; oscillating at 4–8 Hz, these waves construct that 2–3-second window through the integration of several cycles.

This is most clearly seen in musical experience. When a melody is heard, each note physically sounds and ends in a single moment; yet the melody is experienced as "now" even after the notes have ended. When you hear the last note, the first notes still feel like part of the present. "Now," then, is an extended temporal window that contains traces of the past and predictions of the future — not a fixed instant.

The verse in Surah Al-Hajj 47 crowns this distinction on the theological plane: there is no past-future division in God's knowledge. The human "now," by contrast, is the product of a limited and delayed temporal window. The time of the servant and the time of the Creator are incomparable.

Memory: The Continuous Rewriting of the Past

According to the conventional understanding, memories are stored like fixed recordings. Modern neuroscience has shown this to be untrue. Every act of remembering rewrites the memory — a process called reconsolidation. When a memory is reactivated, it becomes labile (susceptible to change); the current context, mood, and expectations are incorporated into the memory, which is then reconsolidated.

Elizabeth Loftus' research has documented this in striking fashion: information added to memory afterward becomes indistinguishable from genuine memories; temporal sequences can be reversed; causal links that never existed can be inserted. The phenomenon known as "false memories" demonstrates just how constructive a structure memory has.

The significance of this finding in the context of fate is substantial. If even the past is

being continuously rewritten, how reliable is the memory of "I chose"? The memory of a choice, just like the feeling of choice, is itself part of fate.

Theodicy: Injustice or Ontological Reality?

The sharpest objection raised against the belief in fate typically takes this form: "If I have no power of choice, why am I held responsible?" This objection accepts the illusion "I am consciously choosing right now" as though it were an ontological reality. Yet as has been demonstrated, this feeling is the brain's retrospective explanation.

In Surah Yunus 99: "Had your Lord willed, all those on earth would have believed." God has willed that some should not believe. This is not arbitrary cruelty but the co-manifestation of the divine names of majesty (jalāl) and beauty (jamāl). Al-Rahmān (the All-Merciful) is understood only in the presence of punishment; Al-'Afuww (the Pardoner) manifests only in the presence of the sinner; Al-'Adl (the Just) is perceived only in contrast with injustice. The manifestation of the names requires opposites.

In Surah Al-A'raf 179: "Certainly We have created for Hell many jinn and humans; they have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear." And in Al-A'raf 198: "You see them looking at you, yet they do not see." And in Surah Al-Anbiya 100: "There they will groan, and they will not hear."

Read carefully, these verses say: beings without consciousness neither see nor hear in this world, and will neither see nor hear in the hereafter. Consciousness is required to feel pain. God does not punish them with suffering, because no inner world capable of registering punishment exists. There is groaning, but they do not hear.

Al-Qasas 68 and the Illusion of Partial Will (Juzʾī Irāda)

Classical Islamic theology (kalām) has attempted to reconcile God's universal will with the human being's partial will (juzʾī irāda). This effort is understandable, since a foundation of will is sought as the basis of responsibility. However, Surah Al-Qasas 68 shakes this equation to its roots: "And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses. The choice is not theirs."

If partial will were truly real in a meaningful sense, there would be a domain outside God's control — which would amount to a denial of universal will. This is precisely what neuroscience demonstrates as well: consciousness is not the cause of the action but its explanation. The servant experiences the created action as "I did it"; the very feeling of willing is itself fate.

Tawakkul: The Psychology of Transcending the Illusion

Those without belief in fate imagine they carry the full weight of life themselves; anxiety over sustenance, fear of death, dread of loss, and the constant struggle for control are the inevitable products of this illusion. When chronic, these lead to stress, depression, and anxiety.

The one who has faith in fate knows that every event is God's creation. In Surah At-

Tawbah 51: "Say: Nothing will befall us except what God has decreed for us." Yet tawakkul (reliance on God) is not passivity; it is acting while knowing that the one who creates the action is God. Holding on to the means is part of fate; knowing that the result comes from God is tawakkul.

The attitude of the believer can be described as follows: instead of "I choose" — "God creates"; instead of "I succeeded" — "God granted it"; instead of "it happened to me" — "God ordained it." This is not merely a semantic shift but a recognition of ontological reality. The brain already labels the past as "now"; the one who believes in fate consciously makes this labeling correspond to reality.

Time, Consciousness, and God's Absolute Will

Physics says there is no absolute "now." Neuroscience shows that consciousness produces not the action but the label attached to the action. Research on memory reveals that even the memory of the past is continuously rewritten. All of these findings indirectly support the ontological reality of fate.

The Quran expressed this long before, and directly: the bird is tied to the neck; the pen has written, the ink has dried. The agent of yashā'u is not the servant — it is God. The choice does not belong to humanity. Consciousness is nothing more than a spectator who experiences the stage God has created as "mine."

"We have made everyone's fate contingent upon their own striving" — no such verse exists. This is an ideologically motivated interpretation injected into the text from the outside — a distortion. The real verse says: the bird is at your neck, the book has been written, the Day of Reckoning will come. And on that day, the one who holds you to account will be none other than your own self.

Noah's Flood: A Regional Catastrophe in the Light of the Shared Testimony of the Torah and the Quran, and Archaeological Findings

Noah's Flood is perhaps one of the most debated and widely resonant events in human history. This great catastrophe, whose traces we find in the written heritage of the Torah, the Quran, and many other ancient cultures, has occupied the agenda of theologians, historians, and archaeologists for centuries. At the center of these debates, however, one question most often stands: Was the Flood a universal catastrophe covering the entire earth, or a regional destruction affecting a specific geography? The answer to this question depends largely on how the Torah is read and translated. For, contrary to popular belief, the apparent contradiction between the Torah and the Quran largely stems from the Torah being translated incorrectly or incompletely. When the texts are examined with proper linguistic tools, it becomes clear that both holy books describe the Flood as a regional catastrophe.

The Flood in the Torah: The Limits of Translation and the Truth of Hebrew

The Question of "Eretz": World or Region?

In translations of the Flood narrative from the Genesis section of the Torah into many languages, it has been rendered with expressions such as "the whole earth"

and "universal destruction." Yet the key Hebrew word underlying these translations — "הָאָרֶץ"

(ha'aretz) — carries an extremely wide range of meanings: "soil," "ground," "region," "country," and "world." Which meaning the word conveys is determined by context, and overlooking this nuance fundamentally transforms the translation.

The Hebrew of Genesis 6:5 reads:

>וַיַּרְא יְהוָה כִּי-רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ

The expression "בָּאָרֶץ" (ba'aretz) here is a combination of the preposition "ב" (ba) and the word "אֶרֶץ" (aretz), meaning "in the land, in the country, in the region." To translate this as "throughout the whole world" is an interpretive choice that goes beyond the text's actual meaning. Therefore, what God observes in the relevant verse is only the condition of humanity in a specific geography; to derive a universal scope from the text is linguistically a forced reading.

A more accurate translation of Genesis 6:5 might thus read:

> "YHWH looked and saw that in that land the wickedness of man was great; every inclination and every thought of his heart was only evil."

The Name of God

There is another notable element in the original Hebrew of Genesis 6:5: the four-letter personal name of God, "יְהוָה" (YHWH) — Yod-He-Vav-He. In Jewish tradition, pronouncing this name was considered forbidden, and substitute words such as "Adonai" (My Lord) or "HaShem" (The Name) were used in its place. As a result of this practice, the name's true sound and comprehensive meaning were gradually forgotten over time. Its translation in the Christian world as "LORD" led to a further departure from its original meaning. Engaging directly with the Hebrew text of the scripture brings this divine name to light — one overlooked in many translations.

"Niham": Regret or Sorrow?

In Genesis 6:6–7, it is stated that God "repented" of having created man. This translation is theologically highly problematic, as it implies that God made a wrong decision and reversed it. Yet the Hebrew verb "נִחַם" (niḥam) used in the original carries a wide semantic range: not only "to repent" but also "to grieve," "to feel pain," "to relent," and even "to be comforted." Although the Jewish translation tradition has foregrounded the meaning "to repent," many Hebrew scholars argue that the verb is used here in the sense of "to feel deep sorrow." This semantic preference is far more consistent both with the transcendent nature of God and with the general tone of the text.

The Dimensions of the Ark and the Contradiction of the Universal Scope Claim

According to Genesis 6:15, God informed Noah of the dimensions of the ark he was commanded to build: three hundred cubits in length, fifty in width, and thirty in height. At this scale, it is clear that the ark's volume would not have been sufficient to house

the millions of species of living creatures on earth. Questions such as how animals unique to different continents would have been gathered together, how they would have been fed throughout the voyage, and how potentially dangerous species would have been kept under control remain unanswered. This reality strongly suggests that the ark was built to accommodate only the animals of a particular region, and therefore that the Flood was not universal but regional in scope.

The Flood in the Quran: The Clear Emphasis on Regionality

Noah's Mission: Only to His Own People

When narrating the Flood of Noah, the Quran draws a clear framework from the outset: Noah is a warner sent to a specific people. Verses 25 and 26 of Surah Hud state this point with great clarity:

> "And We sent Noah to his people. I am a clear warner to you. Worship none but Allah. I fear for you the punishment of a painful day."

It can be seen that the word "people" in this verse is a deliberate choice. Noah was sent not to all of humanity, but to his own community. This contextual framework is the fundamental point of reference for understanding that the Flood affected only the geography inhabited by this people.

Destruction: Only for Those Who Denied

Verse 64 of Surah Al-A'raf offers one of the most unambiguous expressions on this matter:

> "They denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the ark, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Indeed, they were a blind people."

The verse emphasizes that the destruction was specific to the people who denied Noah. There is no mention of all of humanity; rather, it is the belief choice of a particular community and the consequences of that choice that are narrated. No expression supporting a universal catastrophe is present.

The Precondition for Destruction: The Sending of a Warner

As a universal principle of the Quran, a warner must be sent to any community before it is destroyed. Verse 59 of Surah Al-Qasas states this principle explicitly:

> "And your Lord would never destroy the cities until He had sent to their mother-city a messenger reciting to them Our verses. And We would not destroy the cities except when their people were wrongdoers."

Evaluated in light of this principle, it is understood that Noah was sent only to his own people, and only that people was destroyed. The fact that other communities who had not received a warning cannot be considered within the scope of this catastrophe forms an internally consistent religious framework.

Judi: A Mountain Name or a Description?

In verse 44 of Surah Hud, the place where the ark finally rested is identified as Judi:

> "And it was said, 'O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold.' The water subsided, and the matter was accomplished, and the ark rested upon Judi. And it was said, 'Away with the wrongdoing people.'"

The word "Judi" has been interpreted by some commentators as a proper mountain name and efforts have been made to link it to a specific geographical location. However, its basic meaning in Arabic appears as "elevated place" or "fertile and productive land." Some sources also note that it is of Syriac origin and means "holy/sacred mountain." Taking these layers of meaning into account, the verse appears to describe the ark coming to rest on high and fertile terrain. A direct identification with Mount Judi within the borders of Turkey's Şırnak province lacks linguistic and contextual basis. The structure shown in Cizre and popularly known as the tomb of Noah likewise lacks historical or religious grounding; upon closer examination, this structure appears to be more in the nature of a pipe or water channel than a tomb.

The Idols of Noah's People and the Mesopotamian Connection

In Surah Nuh (verses 21–24), the names of the idols worshipped by Noah's people are directly mentioned: Wadd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr. It is known that most of these idols symbolize the sun, moon, and stars. Among the most characteristic representatives of this astronomy-centered pagan culture are the Mesopotamian civilizations. It is well established that in the religious traditions of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylon, celestial bodies were worshipped as divine beings, and that this belief profoundly shaped social and political life. The Quran's specific naming of these idols offers a strong clue that the geography in which Noah's message was delivered was Mesopotamia.

Archaeological Findings: The Flood Traces of Mesopotamia

The Geographic Foundation: Why Mesopotamia?

Mesopotamia is an alluvial plain formed between and around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This geographic structure has created an environment extremely prone to great floods throughout history. The overflow of the two great rivers with the melting of spring snows has regularly brought catastrophe to the communities living on the plain. It is a highly fitting prediction that a large-scale Flood would have occurred in precisely such a geography, and the archaeological findings confirm this prediction.

The Ur Excavations: Leonard Woolley's Discovery

The most striking archaeological evidence of Noah's Flood came to light in the ancient city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia. Excavations begun in the early 1920s by R. H. Hall on behalf of the British Museum were later continued systematically under the leadership of Leonard Woolley. As Woolley deepened the excavations, he encountered pure clay layers beneath the tomb strata. These layers coincided exactly with the geological formations produced by the alluvial sedimentation process of a

sudden and powerful flood. Woolley reached remains of human settlement once again beneath these clay layers, and microscopic analyses carried out on pottery fragments and other finds revealed that the civilization beneath this layer had been completely buried following a great water catastrophe. These findings were interpreted by Woolley as the concrete archaeological remains of the Flood. German researcher Werner Keller also evaluated this data, emphasizing that the traces of the city emerging from beneath the muddy layers constituted incontrovertible evidence of a great flood disaster.

Uruk, Kish, and Shuruppak: Parallel Findings

The traces of the Flood are not limited to Ur alone. Excavations carried out in important Sumerian cities such as Uruk, Kish, and Shuruppak have also shown that a great flood around 3000 BCE is reflected in the layers. In each of these cities, sharply differentiated flood sediments were encountered in the middle of civilizational strata. The fact that findings recur in parallel across multiple cities demonstrates that the catastrophe in question was not confined to a single settlement area, but affected a wide region.

Sumer's Written Testimony: The Epic of Gilgamesh

An important written source that must be evaluated concurrently with the archaeological findings is the Epic of Gilgamesh. In this epic of southern Mesopotamian origin, the story is told of a flood herald warning Utnapishtim — the Sumerian counterpart of Noah — the construction of a vessel, and the rescue of a portion of humanity following a great water catastrophe. The fact that the basic elements of the story overlap so closely with the Torah and Quran narratives shows that this event was transmitted in the Mesopotamian tradition as a living memory from the very earliest periods of history.

The True Harmony of the Two Holy Books

When we evaluate all of this linguistic, theological, and archaeological data together, a clear picture emerges. The apparent contradiction between the Torah and the Quran does not stem from the texts themselves, but from the Torah's not being translated accurately. The great majority of the references to the universality of the Flood in the Torah rest on the word "ha'aretz" being translated too broadly as "the whole world." Yet the natural meaning of this word in context is "that land" or "that region." With accurate translation, both the Torah and the Quran say the same thing: Noah was a warner sent to a specific people; that people rejected his call; thereupon a great water catastrophe occurred affecting only that region; Noah and those who believed in him were saved, while the rest perished.

The fact that the ark's dimensions could not have carried a universal load, the explicit statement that Noah was sent only to his own people, the Quran's religious principle that destruction encompasses only those who received the warning, and the geological and archaeological testimony of Mesopotamia all place this interpretation on firm ground.

Noah's Flood is a historical reality inscribed in the depths of both the holy scriptures and human memory. In order for this catastrophe to be correctly understood, the texts that convey it must be read carefully within their original languages and contexts. When the Hebrew of the Torah is examined meticulously, it becomes apparent that the claim of a universal catastrophe covering the entire earth belongs not to the text but to the translation. The Quran, from the outset, has framed the Flood as a divine intervention specific to a particular people, and has maintained this consistently throughout every narration.

The archaeological excavations carried out in Mesopotamia present, layer by layer, the traces of a great water catastrophe that occurred in the region around 3000 BCE. The findings at Ur, Uruk, Kish, and Shuruppak correspond with the historical core of the Epic of Gilgamesh and prove that this catastrophe left a deep mark in human memory.

In conclusion, within the framework of an accurate linguistic and theological reading, Noah's Flood emerges as a subject on which the Torah and the Quran stand much closer together than we have long assumed. These two holy books do not contradict each other; on the contrary, when correctly understood, they look upon the same historical reality through different but mutually complementary windows.

The Creation of Humanity: An Examination from Quranic and Torah Perspectives

Introduction

The question of human origins and creation has occupied the minds of philosophers, theologians, and ordinary people throughout history. This question goes beyond simply asking "where did we come from?"; it also encompasses deeper matters such as humanity's place in the universe, the nature of the relationship between the sexes, and humanity's connection to God. Religious texts have answered this question from different windows. The Quran and the Torah stand out as two primary sources narrating the creation of humanity; however, the creation narratives of these two texts have over time been conflated, misinterpreted, and have formed the basis of erroneous conclusions that have profoundly influenced perceptions of gender.

The Creation of Humanity in the Quran: An Equal Beginning

Surah An-Nisa, Verse 1: The Foundational Declaration of Creation

One of the most comprehensive and direct verses in the Quran regarding the creation of humanity is the opening verse of Surah An-Nisa:

> "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer." (An-Nisa, 4:1)

Though this verse may appear at first glance to be a simple statement of creation, the concepts it contains are extraordinarily rich and multi-layered.

The Concept of "Nafs Wahida": The expression "nafs wahida" in the verse is generally translated into English as "one soul" or "a single self." However, this concept refers not merely to a single individual, but to the common essence present at the very beginning of human creation. Nowhere in the Quran is this "nafs" explicitly identified as male or female. Therefore, the source of creation is a genderless essence; both sexes derive from this common origin.

The Meaning of "Minhā": The word "minhā," used in the verse to mean "created from it its mate," has in some traditional commentaries been read as "the creation of woman from the body of man." However, this interpretation conflicts with the grammatical structure of Arabic and with the Quran's holistic message. The expression "minhā" conveys that woman was created not from a physical part of man, but from the same creative essence — namely, the nafs wahida. What is emphasized here is not a relationship of superiority or precedence, but a shared origin.

The Meaning of "Minhumā": The word "minhumā" in the subsequent phrase "and dispersed from both of them many men and women" conveys that the human race multiplied from these two beings — the first man and the first woman. The Quran here explicitly points to two distinct and complementary beings, declaring that humanity proliferated from these two origins.

Perhaps the most significant point to note in this verse is the following: the Quran speaks of no gender-based superiority at the beginning of creation. Both woman and man are products of the same divine creative act. The verse, drawing on this equal origin, calls upon human beings to be responsible toward one another and to honor the bonds of kinship. Equality in creation is thus transformed here into a moral foundation.

The Material Creation of Humanity: Earth, Water, and Clay

The Quran describes the physical creation of humanity through different materials in different verses. This variety represents not contradiction, but the different stages of the creative process. The creation of humanity came about through a specific process involving water, earth, and mineral elements. The "nafs wahida" in this context may be understood as the first essence or first soul formed from the combination of these elements. Both man and woman derive from this first essence; therefore, creation is materially equal as well.

The Metaphysical Dimension: The World of Covenant (*Ālam al-Dharr*) and Two Deaths, Two Resurrections

The Quran's understanding of creation is not limited to a purely physical dimension. Human existence begins long before worldly life.

Surah Al-A'raf, verse 172 states:

> “And surely, lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were unaware of this,’ your Lord had taken from the backs of the children of Adam their descendants. And He had made them witnesses against themselves. ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They

had said, ‘Yes, we bear witness.’” (Al-A'raf, 7:172)

This verse reveals that human beings, in a prior dimension of existence known as the ālam al-dharr (the world of particles/covenant), made a covenant with God. That is, before setting foot in the world, the human being existed as a spiritual entity, and a divine covenant was fulfilled in that realm of existence. This understanding shows that humanity is not merely a biological entity, but carries a spiritual, moral, and divine origin.

Surah Ghafir, verse 11 contains the following expression:

> "They will say, 'Our Lord, You made us die twice and gave us life twice, and we have confessed our sins. So is there any way out?'" (Ghafir, 40:11)

This verse explains the cycle of human existence as follows: the human being first exists in the world of covenant; when that existence comes to an end, the first death occurs. Then, developing in the womb, the soul enters the world — this is the second life. With the end of earthly life comes the second death; and on the Day of Resurrection, the second resurrection takes place. These four stages reveal that the human being is not a creature confined to the world alone, but part of a far greater plan of existence.

The Creation of Humanity in the Torah: A Linguistic Analysis of the "Rib" Question

The Narrative in the Book of Genesis

The Torah's Book of Genesis narrates the creation of woman as follows: God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep, takes a piece of his "tsela," and creates Eve from it. For centuries this expression has been translated and interpreted as "rib bone." This interpretation formed the basis of the perception that woman was derived from the body of man and therefore occupies a dependent, secondary position relative to him.

The True Semantic Field of the Word "Tsela"

However, Hebrew linguistics raises serious objections to this interpretation. The semantic map of the Hebrew word "tsela" (צֵלָע) is quite broad:

- Side or edge: Used to refer to the lateral part of a structure or being. For example, in Exodus 25:12, the "sides" of the Ark of the Covenant are expressed with this word.

- Two equal halves: Used when speaking of two equal, complementary parts of a whole.

- Shadow or echo: In a figurative sense, expresses the reflection of something.

Particularly noteworthy is the following usage: in Exodus 14:22, when the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea is described, their passing "alongside" or "through the side of" the sea is also expressed with the word "tsela." In this context, it becomes clear that "tsela" speaks not of a rib, but of a concept of "side" or "being alongside." In light of this linguistic analysis, it may be assessed that the true message of the narrative in Genesis is this: woman was created from man's side, as

an equal half to him. This interpretation positions woman not as a secondary being dependent on man, but alongside him, in a status equal to his. For the side of a person is neither beneath him like his foot, nor above him like his head; it is in a fully equal position.

The Historical Consequences of the Mistranslation

The translation of "tsela" as "rib bone" is not merely a linguistic error; it is a misunderstanding that has generated deep social consequences. This choice most likely reflects the male-dominant tradition of interpretation stretching from antiquity to the modern era. The idea that woman was created from a part of man became the ground of legitimacy for many religious and cultural practices that positioned woman as dependent on man, his "helper," and a secondary being. Yet this is not the intent of the original Hebrew text of the Torah. The holistic message of the text is that man and woman are two equal halves completing one another. Indeed, the words Adam speaks upon seeing Eve in the Book of Genesis also support this interpretation: "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." This expression reflects a sense of unity and equality; it carries no claim of superiority or ownership.

Adam: The Question of the First Human

The Quran's Clear Declaration

Whether Adam was the first human being is a debate that occasionally surfaces and becomes the subject of various speculations. The Quran takes an extremely clear stance on this matter.

In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 30, God says to the angels:

> “When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Surely I will make a caliph on the earth,’ they said, ‘Will You make one there who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Surely I know what you do not know.’” (Al-Baqarah, 2:30)

This verse is of great importance in several respects. First, the angels' question — "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption and sheds blood?" — may imply that they gained such experience from prior beings; it may reflect a knowledge of the history of jinn or other beings on earth. Yet this question also reveals that the angels were unaware of Adam's creation. God's response — "Indeed, I know that which you do not know" — confirms that Adam's creation was a unique and singular event. God brought Adam into existence by subjecting the earth directly to His creative act. This points to Adam's original and primordial position in human history.

The Parallel Between Jesus and Adam

Surah Al 'Imran, verse 59 illuminates this matter from a different angle:

> "Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, 'Be,' and he was." (Al 'Imran, 3:59)

This verse is noteworthy in two respects. First, Adam's creation was brought about

directly by God's command "Be!"; this creation, beyond ordinary biological reproduction, symbolizes a divine intervention. Second, this mode of creation is compared to Jesus's coming into the world without a father. Both cases are presented as examples of extraordinary creation, thereby emphasizing that Adam was not an ordinary human being, but a unique miracle of creation — the first and singular.

The Meaning of the Warning in Paradise

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 35 also sheds light on this discussion:

> “And We said, ‘O Adam! You and your wife dwell in the garden, and both of you eat abundantly from wherever you wish. But do not approach this tree, lest you become among the wrongdoers.’” (Al-Baqarah, 2:35)

The warning given to Adam and his wife in this verse is in complete harmony with the reality that they were the first human couple. Had there already been other humans on earth, it would have been difficult for this first warning and prohibition given in Paradise to carry an original meaning. The fact that the warning was addressed specifically to Adam and his wife points to their unique starting position in human history.

The Expression "Children of Adam" in Surah Al-A'raf

Surah Al-A'raf, verse 27 states:

> "O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts." (Al-A'raf, 7:27)

The expression "children of Adam" is a concept encompassing all of humanity, making it explicitly clear that the human lineage began with Adam. The matter of Satan deceiving Adam and his wife is presented here as the starting point of humanity's collective heritage. This further reinforces the Quran's consistent narrative that Adam was the first human in history.

Human beings do not descend solely from Adam and his wife; they descend from the many men and women who were created in the same manner as they were. Surah An-Nisa, verse 1, explicitly states this reality with the expression "and dispersed from both of them many men and women." The Quran's emphasis is this: humanity shares a common origin constituted collectively by many men and women. This reveals not only a biological reality, but also the theological foundation of equality and brotherhood among human beings. This understanding differs from the idea — prominent in some traditional interpretations — of "humanity descending from a single man and his wife." The Quran positions both man and woman as equal and necessary origins of humanity. From this perspective, it becomes clear that gender equality is not merely a modern value, but a divine creation embedded in the very essence of creation.

A Critique of Traditional Interpretations and the Quran's True Message

1. The Sources of Misinterpretation

Throughout history, the Quran's verses on creation — particularly Surah An-Nisa, verse 1 — have at times been interpreted in association with the rib narrative in the Torah. This tendency is fed by several sources:

The Isrā'iliyyāt tradition: It is known in Islamic history that narratives taken from ancient Jewish and Christian sources — particularly through al-Tabari — have seeped into Islamic exegesis. The rib narrative appears to have entered the Islamic interpretive tradition through this channel. Indeed, some hadith narrations contain expressions indicating that woman was created from a curved rib. However, these narrations are assessed as contradicting the Quran's clear message; many contemporary Muslim scholars have drawn attention to the fact that these narrations are of Isrā'iliyyāt origin.

The male-dominant interpretive tradition: The greater part of the history of Quranic exegesis was shaped within a cultural context that was not gender-egalitarian. In this environment, the Quran's egalitarian message was at times interpreted according to the prevailing social norms of the era, and the secondary position of women was projected onto the creation narrative as well.

2. The Quran's Consistent Message

Yet the Quran offers an extremely consistent and clear message on this matter. Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13 states:

> "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."

This verse makes it explicitly clear that there is no gender-based superiority in creation. The measure of worth in God's sight is taqwa — consciousness of responsibility toward God — not gender. This universal standard forms an integrated picture with the message of equal creation in Surah An-Nisa, verse 1.

Conclusion

The question of human creation rests, in both the Quran and the Torah, upon a profound, multi-layered, and deeply meaningful narrative foundation. The creation narratives of these two sacred texts do not so much contradict one another as they are narratives carrying different emphases, yet pointing toward a common truth.

The "rib" expression in the Torah, when evaluated within its original Hebrew context, carries the message that woman was created from man's side, as an equal half to him. This is an understanding that positions woman not as secondary, but as man's complement. The translation of the word as "rib bone" is an indication that historical and cultural pressures have seeped into the linguistic analysis.

The Quran, for its part, leaves no room for ambiguity on this matter. Surah An-Nisa, verse 1 explicitly declares that woman and man were created from the same nafs —

a common creative essence. Nowhere in the Quran does the expression "woman was created from the rib of man" appear. This narrative is a foreign element that has crept into Islam from the outside.

On the question of Adam, the Quran maintains a consistent position: Adam is the first human being, created from clay by divine command; yet humanity multiplied from the many men and women created from the same common creative source as he and his wife were. All of these analyses demonstrate that the soundest understanding of human creation is possible not through cultural biases guiding one's reading of the texts, but through the texts' own internal logic serving as the guide. The Quran's understanding of creation defines woman and man as equal, mutually complementary beings who originate from the same divine source. This message is not merely a historical piece of information; it is a universal declaration of value founded upon the unity and dignity of humanity.

Child Marriage: An Assessment from the Perspectives of the Quran, Science, and Human Rights

Marriage is a deeply rooted social institution that ensures the continuation of generations and in which individuals support one another on their journey through this world and the next. Islam defines marriage not merely as a biological union, but as the sharing of mutual responsibility between two individuals who have reached mental, moral, and spiritual maturity. However, throughout history, certain circles have attempted to legitimize child marriage as an Islamic practice through mistranslations and narrations stripped of their context. This effort both contradicts the clear provisions of the Holy Quran and conflicts with the fundamental principles of modern science, psychology, and human rights law.

The Quran's Core Criterion for Marriage: Rushd (Maturity)

Surah An-Nisa 4:6 — The Condition of Maturity

One of the primary texts frequently cited in discussions of marriage is the sixth verse of Surah An-Nisa:

> "And test the orphans until they reach marriageable age. Then if you perceive in them sound judgment, release their property to them." (An-Nisa, 4:6)

The concept of rushd in this verse might, on a surface reading, be understood as mere physical growth. Yet in Arabic, rushd is a multidimensional concept encompassing the maturation of reason, the capacity for sound decision-making, and a sense of responsibility. A broad body of literature — from classical Islamic jurists to modern linguists — agrees that rushd encompasses not only physical development but also economic, intellectual, and moral competence.

Viewed from this framework, the verse conveys a clear message: an individual must

be mature not only physically but also mentally and morally in order to bear the responsibilities of the institution of marriage. A child who displays early physical development cannot be expected to possess the competencies marriage requires — such as decision-making, assuming responsibility, and emotional stability. Surah An-Nisa 4:6 therefore does not endorse child marriage; on the contrary, it explicitly establishes a comprehensive maturity requirement for marriage.

The Misunderstood Verse: Surah At-Talaq 65:4

Grammatical Analysis

One of the sources most frequently cited to justify child marriage is verse 4 of Surah At-Talaq. In some translations, this verse is rendered as referring to "girls who have not yet menstruated," creating the impression that it contains a reference to the marriage of minors. However, this translation contains serious errors both grammatically and contextually.

The Arabic expression "lam yahidna" in the verse means "they did not menstruate" — referring to a state that existed in the past. If the verse were genuinely referring to girls who have not yet menstruated (i.e., children who will menstruate in the future), Arabic grammatical rules would require the use of "lamma yahidna." The difference between these two expressions is therefore not merely a matter of a single letter; it represents a fundamental distinction in meaning.

Contextual Reading of the Verse

In an accurate translation, Surah At-Talaq 65:4 reads as follows:

> "And those of your women who have despaired of menstruation — if you are in doubt — their waiting period is three months, as well as those who have not menstruated. And for those who are pregnant, their term is until they give birth. And whoever fears Allah — He will make for him of his matter ease."

Two distinct groups of women are referenced in this verse: first, women who have entered menopause and ceased menstruating; and second, women who are pregnant despite not having menstruated — those who conceived without a menstrual cycle, as understood medically. There is no grammatical or contextual basis in this verse for any reference to children or minors. Using this verse as a justification for child marriage is nothing other than distorting the text by stripping it of its context.

The Marriage Age of Our Mother Aisha in Historical Sources

Another argument used in support of child marriage involves narrations concerning the marriage age of Aisha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad. While some hadith sources record this age as 6 or 9, reliable historical data renders these claims seriously questionable.

First piece of evidence: Aisha's older sister, Asma bint Abi Bakr, is known to have been 10 years her senior. Historians accept that Asma was 27 years old at the time of the migration to Medina in 622 CE. By this calculation, Aisha would have been 17

years old at the time of the migration.

Second piece of evidence: Aisha herself stated that she consciously remembered the events that followed her parents' conversion to Islam. Given that Abu Bakr embraced Islam in 611 CE, Aisha would have needed to be at least 5–6 years old at that time. When these historical calculations are applied to the date of the marriage (around 622 CE), the result indicates that Aisha was approximately 18 years old at the time of her marriage.

These data suggest that the age information found in certain hadith narrations may reflect historical errors, weak chains of transmission, or fabricated narrations. Historians have long debated that some of the reports on this subject carry reliability problems from the standpoint of isnad (chain of transmission) criteria.

Scientific Perspective: Medicine, Psychology, and Neurology

Medical Findings

The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies pregnancies and marriages occurring before the age of 18 as high-risk, drawing particular attention to the fact that pregnancies below the age of 15 reach life-threatening dimensions. The scientific literature is entirely clear on this matter. The primary health problems observed in individuals married at an early age — particularly girls — include:

- A marked increase in maternal and infant mortality rates linked to early pregnancy

- Birth complications due to a pelvis that has not yet completed its development

- Chronic health problems related to iron deficiency and malnutrition

- Gynecological disorders and long-term physical trauma

Psychological and Neurological Development

Neuroscience has established that the human brain's frontal cortex — the region regulating decision-making, a sense of responsibility, and emotional balance — does not fully mature until around the ages of 23–25. Individuals married before this age face serious risks including: disruption of identity development, mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and the risk of emotional abuse. Research shows that the vast majority of individuals married in childhood are forced to abandon their education, laying the groundwork for lifelong economic dependence.

Social Consequences

Child marriage leaves deep marks not only at the individual level but also at the societal level. These may be summarized as follows:

- A decline in women's educational attainment and the loss of their economic independence

- The cyclical transmission of poverty across generations

- Fragile social structures triggered by child labor and early motherhood

- The reinforcement of gender inequality and the systematic violation of women's rights

The Ideal Age of Marriage in Light of Scientific Data

The rushd criterion established by the Quran is in remarkable harmony with the findings of modern science. Taking into account scientific, biological, and psychological developmental data, the ideal age ranges for marriage may be assessed as follows:

For women (ages 20–25): Although physical development is largely complete around the age of 18, emotional maturity, self-identity, and the capacity for empathy are established on a stronger footing between the ages of 20 and 25. This period represents the most suitable range for an individual to consolidate their education and to healthily assume the responsibilities of marriage.

For men (ages 23–30): In men, frontal cortex development is completed somewhat later than in women. Ages 23–25 and beyond emerge as a more favorable period for the economic, social, and emotional responsibilities that marriage requires to be met in a healthy manner.

These age ranges are not absolute boundaries but average values to be assessed with individual differences in mind. Nevertheless, both the Quran's condition of rushd and scientific evidence consistently demonstrate that marriage requires far more than physical maturity — it demands mental, emotional, and moral readiness.

Conclusion

Child marriage is compatible neither with the fundamental principles of Islam nor with modern science and the understanding of human rights. The Holy Quran stipulates not only physical but also mental and moral maturity as a condition for marriage. The rushd criterion in Surah An-Nisa and the grammatical analysis of Surah At-Talaq make this reality unmistakably clear. The historical data concerning Aisha's marriage age render the reliability of narrations used to legitimize child marriage questionable. Scientific findings from medicine, neurology, and psychology all point to the same conclusion: for a healthy and functional marriage, the individual must be fully mature in body, mind, and spirit.

For this reason, efforts to legitimize child marriage on religious or cultural grounds represent a stance that imposes severe costs on individuals and undermines social justice and equality. This holistic approach — grounded in the fundamental principles of Islam, scientific truths, and universal human rights — clearly confirms that marriage can only be established between mature, conscious, and free individuals. The entrenchment of this perspective at the level of social awareness will make a significant contribution to securing both individual well-being and social justice.

Polygamy in Islam: An Assessment of Justice, Love, and Human Nature

Islam defines the institution of marriage not merely as a biological or social necessity, but as a bond with spiritual, moral, and eternal dimensions. From this perspective, love and respect between spouses transcend being a worldly emotion and become a bond rooted in God's pleasure, aimed at transcending death and separation. At the heart of Islam's understanding of marriage lies the principle of justice. The issue of polygamy emerges precisely as a subject intertwined with this principle of justice, carrying historical, social, and theological layers.

The Source of Love: Loving for the Sake of God

According to Islamic belief, true and lasting love is love for the sake of God. A Muslim loves their spouse, children, family, and all loved ones as beings created and entrusted by God. Because this love is grounded not in worldly interests, fleeting emotions, or the desires of the ego, but in God's pleasure, it carries meaning both in this world and in the hereafter. This belief directly shapes the institution of marriage. When love and respect between spouses are lived in accordance with God's command, they become an act of worship that draws one closer to their Lord. Therefore, marriage in Islam is not a means of carnal satisfaction, but a shared servitude and a companionship that will carry one another into eternity.

The Qur'an's Approach to Polygamy: A Right, Not an Obligation

Polygamy has historically existed in many societies and religions. Islam approached this matter by imposing limits and conditions, presenting it neither as a necessity nor as an encouraged way of life. Verse 3 of Surah An-Nisa is the fundamental reference point on this subject:

"And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then marry only one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline to injustice."

The first notable point in this verse is that polygamy is presented as a conditional permission. When examined in the context of its revelation, it becomes clear that this permission arose to address the issue of orphans and widowed women left without support during times of war. In other words, this ruling was shaped in the face of a social necessity and for a specific purpose of social protection. The second and critically important point is the condition of justice. The Qur'an ties this permission to justice. If justice cannot be ensured, monogamy is commanded. This framework presents not a regulation that encourages polygamy, but one that subjects it to extremely difficult conditions.

The Limits of Justice: Is Emotional Equality Possible?

The most crucial dimension of this matter is the extent to which justice can actually be achieved. Verse 129 of Surah An-Nisa makes a remarkably striking statement on this point:

"And you will never be able to be equal between wives, even if you should strive to do so."

This verse reflects an intersection where human reality meets divine knowledge. God, as the One who created and knows best the human heart and emotional world, explicitly declares that complete and perfect emotional equality cannot be realized in practice. The equal distribution of feelings such as love, attention, and heartfelt attachment is a far more difficult — and often impossible — matter than the sharing of material rights. Nevertheless, Islam does not use this difficulty as a justification to push people toward irresponsibility. It takes effort, intention, and sincere striving toward justice as its foundation. A man's complete inclination toward one wife to the exclusion of the other is prohibited. This demonstrates that even in matters of emotional justice, a reasonable pursuit of balance is obligatory.

Human Nature and the Social Reality of Polygamy

Islam does not merely establish legal norms; it also takes into account human psychology, social dynamics, and natural inclinations. Within this framework, elements such as a woman's sense of jealousy and possessiveness, and the protective instinct of husbands over wives and fathers over daughters, play a determining role in Islam's view of polygamy. No father willingly and wholeheartedly consents to his daughter entering a relationship as a man's second, third, or fourth wife. This is not merely a cultural attitude, but a natural reflection of paternal love and the instinct to protect. Similarly, a woman being forced to share her husband with another woman conflicts with her innate need to be loved uniquely and to feel secure. This reality helps us understand the Qur'an's emphasis on justice: an accounting of justice that disregards emotions remains only on paper.

A Woman's Consent: The Cornerstone of Marriage

Islam has built the marriage contract on mutual consent. A woman decides to marry of her own free will; a marriage conducted under compulsion is invalid under Islamic law. This principle retains its validity when polygamy is in question as well. A man taking a second wife directly affects the emotional and psychological state of his existing wife. For this reason, many Islamic scholars have emphasized that giving due consideration to the existing wife's consent is a moral necessity.

Polygamy's Position as an Exception

In light of all these considerations, it becomes clear that polygamy in Islam is effectively confined to an extremely narrow space in practical terms. All of the following conditions must be met simultaneously:

First, the man must have the capacity to maintain material and behavioral justice among his wives. The equal fulfillment of tangible rights such as housing, financial support, and time falls within this scope.

Second, he must make a sincere effort to seek emotional balance and refrain from inclining completely toward one side.

Third, the psychological and emotional state of the existing wife must be taken into consideration and her consent must be respected.

Fourth, the social context and family dynamics must inevitably be taken into account.

Meeting all of these conditions is extremely difficult, both conscientiously and in practice. For this reason, Islam's legitimization of polygamy should be understood not as an encouragement, but as a limited door opened under certain necessities and conditions.

Islam's approach to the issue of polygamy reflects, beyond a mere legal regulation, a profound moral understanding that encompasses the human being in their entirety. The Qur'an has both granted permission on this matter and subjected that permission to extremely difficult conditions. It has itself declared that complete emotional equality cannot be achieved, and through this declaration, has in effect pointed to monogamy as the safest and most just path. This stance of Islam neither renders polygamy an ordinary choice nor prohibits it in absolute terms. However, this approach — which places justice and human dignity at its center — draws a framework that holds both sexes accountable and keeps conscience as its foundation. Ultimately, this matter is a domain that requires individual maturity, social context, and deep moral reckoning — one that must be approached with careful deliberation and sensitivity.

Women's Rights within the Framework of the Qur'an's Universal Ethics: An Assessment of the Verses on Slander in Surah An-Nur

The Qur'an presents a universal moral teaching centered on human dignity and justice. This teaching foregrounds not individuals or particular communities, but immutable human principles, legal norms, and moral responsibilities. Yet throughout history, this universal message of the Qur'an has been overshadowed by the culture of narration, traditionalist interpretations, and patriarchal mentality; in many verses, the intended meaning has been reduced to historical events or specific individuals. This reduction represents a serious deviation from both the essence of the Qur'an and the foundational values of Islam. In this context, one of the most striking examples is found in the verses of Surah An-Nur concerning slander of chastity. In the classical Islamic tradition, these verses have largely been associated with the event known as the "Incident of the Ifk" — the slander directed against our mother Aisha. Yet this approach narrows the profound legal, moral, and social message of the verses, reducing the Qur'an's voice addressed to all of humanity into the voice of a single historical moment.

The Verses on Slander in Surah An-Nur and the Problem of Historical Reductionism

Verses 11–13 of Surah An-Nur read as follows:

> "Indeed, those who brought the slander are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather, it is good for you. For every person among them is what he has earned from the sin, and he who took upon himself the greater portion thereof — for him is a great punishment. Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another and say, 'This is an obvious falsehood'? Why did they not bring four witnesses? And since they did not bring the witnesses, then it is they who are the liars in the sight of Allah."

When we examine how these verses have been read in classical exegesis, the vast majority link them directly to the slander against our mother Aisha. This approach draws on the early hadith literature, positioning narrations as the primary reference point for Qur'anic interpretation. However, this mode of interpretation carries a serious methodological problem: the text is torn from its context and transformed from a universal principle into the narrative of a localized historical event.

When attention is paid to the Qur'an's narrative structure, it becomes apparent that this book does not center individuals; rather, it foregrounds the moral qualities and social conditions that individuals represent. Consider Pharaoh: the Qur'an does not narrate him as an individual, but as a symbol of oppression and despotism. His name is mentioned — not to confine him to a particular historical moment, but to expose the disease of power that may be encountered in every era of human history. The same logic applies to Surah An-Nur. The organized slander campaign referenced in the verses is narrated not through specific persons, but through a collective moral crisis.

In this context, the following question is critically important: If the Qur'an were speaking solely about the slander against our mother Aisha, what meaning would this message retain for all other ages? Such a reduction would entirely eliminate the universal function of the verses. Yet the message of Surah An-Nur is clear: slander is not an individual attack but a collective act that destroys the social order, and the Qur'an subjects this act to both individual and societal criminal and moral sanctions.

Slander: An Individual Crime or a Social Corruption?

The opening sentence of verse 11 of Surah An-Nur is noteworthy: "Indeed, those who brought the slander are a group among you." This expression removes the event from the individual sphere and transforms it into a collective act. What is being described is an organized campaign of slander — a depiction of a calculated, premeditated social assault on a woman.

In patriarchal societies, particularly within the Middle Eastern cultural sphere, a woman's sexual chastity has never been viewed solely as a personal matter. A woman's honor has been coded simultaneously as the honor of the family, the tribe, and the community. This code has served as the justifying ground for keeping women under constant surveillance and suspicion. In this context, slander has functioned not merely as an attack on an individual, but as a systematic instrument used to erase women from the public sphere and to neutralize their voice and existence.

It is precisely at this point that the Qur'an intervenes. By foregrounding the requirement of four witnesses with respect to slander of chastity, Surah An-Nur declares that an accusation without evidence carries no legal value. This is not merely a procedural legal norm; it is also a call for a fundamental intellectual transformation. By foregrounding the concept of "good assumption" (husn al-zann), the Qur'an commands believing men and women to develop a mental resistance against slander.

The question — "Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another and say, 'This is an obvious falsehood'?" — is both a moral and an epistemological interrogation. The phrase "good assumption" here does not denote naive optimism; rather, it means adopting a critical stance against accusations devoid of evidence. The Qur'an says to the community: without evidence, there is no accusation. And those who propagate such evidence-free accusations are counted as liars before God. This is an extraordinarily powerful assertion and warning, both in its moral and legal dimensions.

Women, Sin, and the Cultural Roots of Patriarchal Mentality

The perspective that views women as the source of sin and moral corruption represents a deeply rooted and widespread ideological framework in human history. One of the most prominent expressions of this framework is found in the Judeo-Christian tradition of Adam and Eve. This narrative positioned Eve as the being who caused humanity's expulsion from Paradise by eating the forbidden fruit, and depicted the female body and will as the instrument of Satan. This theological framework manifested itself in a particularly pronounced form in medieval Christianity. Many Church Fathers defined woman as the representative not of reason and spirit, but of body and seduction. This understanding provided the theological legitimacy for suppressing women's visibility in the public sphere, eliminating their property rights, and keeping them under perpetual religious surveillance.

In the Middle Eastern cultural sphere, this understanding became intertwined with the tribal ethics of the pre-Islamic era. Since a woman's honor signified the honor of the clan, the female body became an object of political relations and alliances between men. In this context, slander functioned not merely as a lie, but as one of the most effective weapons for toppling rival groups and families, and for excluding women from public life.

It is precisely this cultural legacy that the Qur'an directly confronts and develops a discourse to challenge. The slander verses of Surah An-Nur, addressing a community that persisted within this patriarchal culture, declare: an accusation without evidence is nothing more than a lie spoken aloud. And those who utter this lie incur a grave moral and legal responsibility.

Semantic Integrity and Not Decontextualizing the Qur'an

Correctly understanding a text requires remaining faithful to its internal coherence. From the perspective of semantic interpretation, reading a text in isolation from its context inevitably leads to distortions of meaning. Surah An-Nur does not reduce topics such as fornication, slander of chastity, and sexuality to mere individual moral matters; it treats them as inseparable elements of social order and legal norms.

When the holistic structure of this surah is examined, it becomes apparent that the crimes of fornication and slander are bound together by legal and moral ties. The high evidentiary threshold requiring four witnesses to prove fornication is designed to prevent arbitrary accusations. The Qur'an's stance here is not merely a legal

mechanism aimed at resolving individual cases; it is a moral education intended to bring about a fundamental transformation in social consciousness.

Within this framework, reading verses 11–13 of Surah An-Nur exclusively through the lens of the Incident of the Ifk renders the deep layers of meaning in the text invisible. The actual addressee of these verses is not only the Prophet Muhammad's wife, but all women in every era who have been subjected to an organized slander campaign. The Qur'an's message is timeless; it is not imprisoned in a particular historical moment.

The Qur'an's Legal and Moral Guarantee of Women's Rights

The Qur'an's approach to women's rights takes shape within both a moral and a legal framework. The fundamental elements of this framework are as follows:

First, the burden of proof. The Qur'an places upon anyone who makes an accusation of fornication the obligation to produce four witnesses. In the historical conditions of that era, this was a nearly impossible evidentiary threshold. The Qur'an set this threshold deliberately high, because the aim was to protect women from arbitrary accusations and to encircle the culture of slander with a deterrent sanction.

Second, collective moral responsibility. Surah An-Nur imposes not only a legal but also a social responsibility in response to slander. Believing men and women, upon hearing news of slander, are obligated to demonstrate active moral resistance. This is a principle that commands not passive spectatorship, but the cultivation of trust in the face of suspicion and critique in the face of gossip.

Third, criminal responsibility. The verses announce a great punishment not only for those who carry the slander but also for the chief organizer who bears the greatest portion of it. This reflects a forward-thinking legal understanding that attributes organizational responsibility for social crime.

Fourth, equality of dignity. The Qur'an's stance on this matter observes no hierarchy of dignity between man and woman. A woman who has been slandered is a full individual entitled to protection in legal and moral terms. This approach stands in direct contradiction to the understanding in patriarchal societies that regards women as the object of honor.

The Effect of Narration Culture on Qur'anic Interpretation

When examining the historical process of Qur'anic interpretation, it becomes clear that the tradition of exegesis has been largely intertwined with hadith and narration culture. This has brought with it significant interpretive problems. Some narrations lock the Qur'an's universal message into specific historical contexts, and the cultural biases of those contexts seep into the Qur'an's sphere of meaning.

In the specific case of Surah An-Nur, this problem is particularly pronounced. The narrations concerning the Incident of the Ifk have formed an extremely rich and detailed body of storytelling. This narrative has largely shaped Qur'anic exegesis, leaving the theological and legal message of the verses overshadowed by the

historical event narrative. Moreover, some of these narrations carry the pre-Islamic Arab culture's biases against women, and these biases are installed in Qur'anic interpretation as though they were a legitimate foundation.

The Qur'an's own internal coherence and narrative logic offer a powerful methodological criterion against these tradition-based interpretations. If an interpretation contradicts the Qur'an as a whole, or reduces universal principles to singular events, then that interpretation stands in need of scrutiny. To understand the Qur'an is not to bury it in the mud of history, but to correctly identify its message — a message that speaks from within history yet transcends it.

Reading the Qur'an's Message on a Universal Scale

The verses on slander of chastity in Surah An-Nur are neither merely a historical document nor the story of a single individual. They constitute a body of principles offering a universal moral and legal framework against organized campaigns of slander directed at women in every age and every geography. By framing this matter with legal norms, the Qur'an places women under protection from both individual and societal assaults.

The deeply rooted ideology of patriarchal thought — which positions women as the source of sin and moral corruption — stands in direct contradiction to the universal understanding of human dignity presented by the Qur'an. Surah An-Nur has profoundly grasped this contradiction and has erected both a moral and a legal defense wall against the culture of slander imposed by patriarchal societies.

To read this message correctly, two fundamental conditions are necessary: First, to read the Qur'an within its own wholeness and in fidelity to the principle of semantic coherence. Second, to maintain a critical distance from the historical reductions imposed by narration culture and traditionalist interpretations.

The Qur'an is a book that proceeds from principles rather than persons, from values rather than events. When the message of Surah An-Nur is read from this perspective, it expresses a powerful and timeless principle that entrusts the dignity and rights of women to the collective responsibility of society. To understand and to live by this principle is the most concrete expression of respect for the spirit of the Qur'an, the universal ethics of Islam, and human dignity.

The Right of Women to Worship During Menstruation in the Light of the Quran: Historical Deviations and Quranic Truth

The Holy Quran, the primary source of Islam, was revealed as a universal guide for humanity, built upon the principles of justice, equality, and freedom. Yet throughout history, various human interpretations, cultural accumulations, and fabricated narrations have been mixed into the essence of this divine guide; the enlightened message of the Quran has at times been overshadowed by customs and traditions. One of the most striking of these deviations is the prohibition of women from worshipping during their menstrual period. However, a holistic reading of the Quran clearly reveals that this prohibition does not stem from a divine command, but rather

from the infiltration of pre-Islamic cultures and foreign religious practices into Islamic society.

The Quran's View on Menstruation: The Concept of "Adhā"

The only direct Quranic source touching on the matter of menstruation is verse 222 of Surah Al-Baqarah:

> "And they ask you about menstruation. Say: It is adhā, so keep away from women during menstruation, and do not approach them until they are cleansed. When they have cleansed themselves, come to them as Allah has commanded you. Indeed, Allah loves those who repent and those who purify themselves." (Al-Baqarah, 2:222)

The word "adhā" used in this verse has most often been interpreted in the Islamic tradition as "filth" or "impurity"; however, this interpretation does not accurately reflect the original semantic range of the word in Arabic. The word "adhā" is used throughout the Quran to mean discomfort, distress, or a painful condition. Indeed, the same root appears in other verses to describe a physical or psychological discomfort. Therefore, the Quran associates the menstrual period not with spiritual or moral impurity, but with a temporary physiological discomfort.

The concept of "tahāra," which is translated as "cleanliness" in the traditional exegetical tradition, also deserves separate examination. Although "tahāra" lexically means purification and cleansing, the context in this verse points to the end of a physiological process — that is, recovery from discomfort. The verse commands only abstention from sexual intercourse during this period; no prohibition is imposed concerning prayer, fasting, supplication, or any other act of worship. Looking at the verse as a whole, it is indisputable that the focus of the ruling is on sexual relations between spouses. Had Allah intended a general prohibition encompassing acts of worship, He would have stated this clearly and directly; for the Quran always declares what it forbids in plain language.

Historical Deviations: The Legacy of Pre-Islamic Cultures

There is strong historical evidence that the worship prohibitions imposed on women during menstruation were nourished by pre-Islamic cultures.

In the Zoroastrian tradition, menstruating women were kept away from sacred spaces; during this period, women were effectively placed in a form of social quarantine. Their approach to the sacred fire and participation in religious rituals were strictly forbidden.

In Hinduism, a similar understanding prevailed. Menstruating women were forbidden from entering temples, participating in religious ceremonies, and even eating with their families. A woman in this state was considered "polluted" in social terms and was isolated.

In the Jewish tradition, Chapter 15 of the Book of Leviticus declares a menstruating woman and everything she touches as "unclean." According to this understanding, anyone who touches a menstruating woman must also undergo a process of

purification.

The geography across which Islam spread was the crossroads of these three major cultures. These cultural prejudices, which seeped into society through narrations and juristic opinions, were eventually legitimized as though they had a Quranic basis. Yet looking at early Islamic history, there is significant evidence indicating that Muslim women during the time of the Prophet Muhammad did not face such strict prohibitions. This rigidity in practice was shaped in later periods as a product of jurisprudence's intensive contact with cultural environments.

The Quranic Principle of Equality: Women and Men Share Equal Responsibility in Worship

The Quran recognizes no hierarchy or distinction between women and men regarding the responsibility of worship and divine reward. This principle is explicitly stated in numerous verses:

> "Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer — We will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do." (An-Nahl, 16:97)

This verse emphasizes that the reward for faith and righteous deeds is independent of gender. If women were unable to worship during their menstrual periods, which constitute a significant portion of their lives, this would directly contradict this Quranic principle of equality. Because on average, a woman spends approximately fifteen to twenty-five percent of her life in menstrual periods. Keeping women away from acts of worship for such a long duration means permanently placing them behind men in spiritual terms — a view that the entirety of the Quran rejects.

The same principle of equality resonates in this verse as well:

> "Indeed, Muslim men and Muslim women, believing men and believing women, devoutly obedient men and devoutly obedient women..." (Al-Ahzab, 33:35)

In this verse, the Quran reinforces, by listing men and women side by side one after another, that both genders bear the same religious responsibilities and obligations.

The Authority to Determine What Is Forbidden Belongs to Allah Alone

One of the most fundamental principles of Islam is that the authority to determine what is permissible (halal) and what is forbidden (haram) belongs exclusively to Allah. The Quran is extremely clear on this matter:

> "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — it is those who are the disbelievers." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:44)

> "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — it is those who are the wrongdoers." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:45)

These verses indicate that prohibitions without a Quranic basis amount to a usurpation of divine authority. When the Quran has not prohibited worship during

menstruation, presenting this prohibition as a religious obligation is tantamount to legislating in place of Allah. This is one of the attitudes toward which the Quran directs its most severe criticism. Indeed, the Quran does not even grant the Prophet Muhammad the authority to forbid something without Allah's permission:

> "O Prophet! Why do you prohibit yourself from what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives?" (At-Tahrim, 66:1)

This verse reveals, in a most striking manner, the Quranic sensitivity regarding the determination of prohibitions and who the exclusive holder of that authority is.

An Epistemological Critique of the Traditional Understanding

The primary source upon which the views prohibiting worship during menstruation rest is hadith narrations. However, from a Quran-centered epistemological standpoint, these narrations lose their validity at points where they contradict the Quran. For while the Quran describes itself as "a clarification of all things" (An-Nahl, 16:89) and as a preserved book, the hadith corpus has, throughout history, been contaminated by numerous fabricated and weak narrations.

The Quran warns Muslims against this danger as follows:

> "And they will say: 'Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our masters and our dignitaries, and they led us astray from the right path.'" (Al-Ahzab, 33:67)

This verse draws attention to how dangerous blind adherence to authority can be. No matter how respected religious authorities may be, their views must be tested against the explicit text of the Quran. A prohibition not found in the Quran cannot be introduced into religious life solely on the basis of scholarly consensus.

A Scientific Perspective: A Physiological Process Cannot Be a Spiritual Obstacle

Modern medicine defines the menstrual period as an entirely normal and healthy physiological process. The United Nations and many other international institutions have explicitly stated that excluding women from social, public, or spiritual spheres on the grounds of menstruation constitutes a form of discrimination. The Quran's characterization of this process as "adhā" — a discomfort — is consistent with this scientific reality: the condition in question is not an impurity but a physiological process. Worship is the deepest and most personal connection between a human being and Allah. From a Quranic perspective, there exists no physiological condition that should prevent a woman from establishing this connection.

The Holy Quran prohibits only sexual intercourse during the menstrual period; it imposes no restriction whatsoever on worship. Understandings that prevent women from performing prayers, fasting, or other acts of worship during this period have no Quranic foundation. These prohibitions are a legacy infiltrated into Islamic society from pre-Islamic cultures and from Jewish, Zoroastrian, and Hindu traditions. The Quran places women and men on a completely equal footing with regard to the responsibility of worship. Repeatedly emphasizing that the authority to determine what is forbidden belongs solely to Allah, the Quran adopts a firm stance against the

usurpation of this authority by human interpretations. Accordingly, it is an obligation for Muslims to take the Quran — not tradition — as their basis in this matter; to question, by the Quranic standard, every practice that restricts women's right to worship. Truly returning to the Quran requires reading it free from all presuppositions, carefully distinguishing cultural accumulation from the divine message, and ultimately recognizing no human-made barrier as legitimate in the connection each Muslim establishes with Allah. This path is the authentic expression of both individual emancipation and the universal principle of justice in Islam.

Divorce According to the Quran: Justice, Rights, and a Critique of Traditional Practices

Divorce is a deeply rooted issue that has been debated throughout history in both its religious and social dimensions, taking different forms across societies and eras. Islam ties divorce to specific rules and timeframes, aiming to protect the rights of both women and men. However, traditional understandings and the interpretations of legal schools have over time distorted these rules, creating a practice far removed from the spirit of the Quran. Here, we will examine the profound differences between the Quran's provisions on divorce and the practices of the legal schools, and address the individual, psychological, and social consequences of denying women's right to divorce.

The Quran's Approach to Divorce: Process, Balance, and Justice

The Quran defines divorce not as a hasty act, but as a deliberate process spread over time that safeguards the rights of both parties. Verses 226 and 227 of Surah Al-Baqarah state that spouses intending divorce must wait four months, and that if reconciliation is possible at the end of this period, they may continue their marriage. This four-month period is not a punishment; it is a space for reflection, allowing the parties to listen to one another, for anger to subside, and for healthier decisions to be made.

> "For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months. If they return, then indeed Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. And if they decide on divorce, then indeed Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (Al-Baqarah 2:226–227)

Verse 228 of Surah Al-Baqarah addresses the rights of women and men in the divorce process within an exceptionally balanced framework:

> "Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this period if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise." (Al-Baqarah 2:228)

The phrase "due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them" clearly demonstrates that divorce is not solely an act within the man's initiative — women

equally possess the right to divorce. Traditional understanding, however, has ignored this equality, pushing women into a passive, rightless, and silenced position; this contradicts both the Quranic text and the fundamental principle of justice.

Verses 229 and 230 of Surah Al-Baqarah state that divorce may occur a total of two times, and that the third divorce represents an irreversible threshold — the right to remarry can only arise after an intervening marriage. The purpose of this arrangement is to prevent spouses from repeatedly harming one another and to emphasize that marriage is a serious bond. The Quran introduced this provision not as a tool of punishment, but as a safeguard against the exploitation of marriage and for the protection of the family.

> "Divorce is twice. Then, either keep in an acceptable manner or release with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah — it is those who are the wrongdoers. And if he has divorced her the third time, then she is not lawful to him afterward until she marries a husband other than him. And if the latter husband divorces her, there is no blame upon the woman and her former husband for returning to each other if they think that they can keep the limits of Allah. These are the limits of Allah, which He makes clear to a people who know." (Al-Baqarah 2:229–230)

A Critique of Traditional Practices: Triple Talaq and Hullah

Despite the Quran's regulation of divorce as a gradual process spread over time, traditional understanding has seriously disrupted this balance. The most striking example is the practice of "triple talaq." The notion that a man saying "I divorce you three times" in a moment of anger or all at once immediately and irrevocably terminates a marriage entirely departs from the process the Quran envisions. In the Quran, divorce is a process stretched over weeks and months, allowing time for reflection and reconciliation; yet this practice makes decisions taken at the peak of anger irreversible, tearing families apart.

The practice of hullah represents an even more severe form of this distortion. Verse 230 of Surah Al-Baqarah states that after a third divorce, in order for the couple to remarry, the woman must first marry another man and then be divorced by him. The true purpose of this provision is to prevent the exploitation of marriage and to compel the parties to act far more consciously regarding a potential reunion. However, the legal schools distorted this provision into a mechanism in which a woman is symbolically married to another man for a single night and immediately divorced — an arrangement often built on financial interest. This practice is an injustice that both uses the woman as an instrument and corrupts the institution of marriage from within. While the Quran envisions marriages built on love, compassion, and mutual respect, hullah stands in direct opposition to this foundation.

The Hanafi school's recognition of divorce utterances made under duress or in anger

as legally valid reflects a similar distortion. The Quran treats divorce as a decision made with conscious and free will. Accepting that words spoken under pressure, in fear, or at the height of rage carry legal validity both undermines the principle of free will and overturns the fundamental logic of the Quran's approach to divorce.

Women's Right to Divorce: Individual and Social Dimensions

The fact that women's right to divorce has been effectively blocked or subjected to onerous conditions under traditional understanding causes concrete and deep wounds that go far beyond an abstract legal problem. The denial of this right perpetuates numerous problems — psychological violence, economic dependency, sexual abuse, and emotional exhaustion — making them permanent. The woman becomes trapped in an unwanted, unhealthy, and even dangerous relationship. This profoundly affects both the individual's mental health and the overall wellbeing of children and society.

The Quran does not ignore this reality. While verse 19 of Surah An-Nisa commands spouses to "live with them in kindness," verse 231 of Surah Al-Baqarah emphasizes that once the decision to divorce is finalized, keeping a woman in limbo with the intent to harm her is explicitly forbidden. In other words, the Quran does not aim to force a woman to remain in an unwanted marriage, but rather envisions a union built on peace, tranquility, and compassion. Presenting the continuation of a marriage filled with hardship and injustice as a religious obligation is directly contrary to this fundamental spirit of the Quran.

The Psychological Dimension: Personality Disorders and Destruction Within Marriage

To make this issue more concrete, consider a particularly instructive example: the marriage of a woman with schizoid personality disorder and a man with antisocial personality disorder. An individual with schizoid personality disorder has difficulty forming emotional relationships, is introverted, prefers solitude over close relationships, and experiences marked restriction in emotional expression. This individual's inability to form emotional bonds in marriage leads to a serious communication breakdown with their spouse — and they may not be fully aware of this situation or may be unable to change it.

Antisocial personality disorder presents a far more severe and outward-facing picture. Individuals with this disorder prominently exhibit a lack of empathy, habitual lying, manipulation of others, absence of guilt, and a tendency not to refrain from harming others. This profile is often accompanied by physical or psychological violence. Antisocial personality disorder is not a mental illness; the individual's mental competence and legal capacity are intact. Therefore, an individual with this disorder cannot be exempted from moral and legal responsibility for their actions.

When these two personality structures come together in a marriage, the resulting picture is deeply destructive. The man, rather than responding to the woman's emotional withdrawal with understanding, attempts to control her through pressure, violence, and manipulation. The woman withdraws further into herself, becomes unresponsive, and reaches a state of incapacity to ask for help. This vicious cycle

becomes a source of chronic trauma for both the woman and, if present, the children.

The most striking concrete illustration of this picture can be considered through the Cem Garipoğlu case. This case, representing the most extreme end of antisocial personality disorder, lays bare how this disorder can create destruction within a marriage. Could parents who have married their daughter to someone with this disorder possibly want their daughter to remain in that marriage simply because traditional understanding says "women have no right to divorce"? Everyone must confront this question and answer it with their own conscience.

In such cases where women's right to divorce is effectively blocked, the following consequences emerge: The woman becomes physically and psychologically exhausted. Severe psychiatric conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and chronic anxiety may develop. Children growing up in this unhealthy environment may develop behavioral and emotional disorders. Since religious values are perceived as having been used as instruments of this injustice, faith crises deepen and society's understanding of religion is damaged.

A Call for a Quran-Centered Approach

In regulating divorce, the Quran has equally safeguarded the rights of both women and men, encouraged reconciliation and peace, and — when these prove impossible — established divorce as a legitimate and accessible means of exit. Within this framework, a healthy religious understanding should be grounded in the following principles:

- The Quran should be accepted as sufficient, and the narrations and interpretations of the legal schools should be viewed with a critical eye. Every tradition carries the imprint of the social conditions and power relations of its era; it is essential that these imprints not be conflated with the universal principles of revelation.

- Practices such as hullah should be rejected on both religious and moral grounds. These practices belong not to the understanding of marriage envisioned by the Quran, but to a distorted mentality that instrumentalizes religious rules.

- Women's right to divorce must be safeguarded within the framework the Quran has drawn. This right is not a concession or an exception — it is a fundamental human right that the Quran explicitly recognizes.

Imposing the continuation of psychologically and physically harmful relationships as a religious obligation serves not the purpose of religion, but the hatred directed against it. The peace, justice, and compassion the Quran aims for can only be achieved through an understanding that preserves the dignity and free will of both parties. Divorce should not be a hastily made decision — but neither should it be withheld as the alternative to a lifetime spent in injustice. The justice envisioned by Islam requires precisely the establishment of this balance.

An Analysis of Word Analysis and Contextual Interpretation of Quran 4:34

The Correct Understanding of the Quran

Correct understanding of the Quran is possible not only through literal translation, but through etymological analysis of words, the context surrounding the verse, and the Quran's overall coherence. Translation work carries great responsibility in this regard, as mistranslating a word can lay the groundwork for perceptions that contradict the religion's fundamental moral principles.

One of the most striking examples of this risk throughout history is Surah An-Nisa, verse 34. This verse became the focal point of extremely negative perceptions regarding Islam's approach to women, particularly due to the translation of the verb "daraba" as "to beat." Yet a careful philological and contextual analysis of the three key concepts in this verse —قوّامُونَ(qawwamun), نُشُوز(nushuz), and ضَرَبَ (daraba) — reveals that the verse carries a far more comprehensive and constructive meaning.

The Semantic Range of "Daraba"

Semantic richness in Arabic varies greatly depending on which preposition or noun the verb is used with. This is especially decisive for "daraba," one of the most frequently discussed words in the Quran. The verb "daraba" appears in over 58 different contexts across various surahs and takes on entirely different meanings depending on its grammatical structure. Some of these meanings are as follows:

- To be condemned / to fall into humiliation: In Surah Al-Baqarah 2:61, this verb is used to describe the state of degradation the Children of Israel fell into.

- To travel, to go out: In Al-Baqarah 2:273, Al-Imran 3:156, and An-Nisa 4:101, the verb carries the meaning of traveling in the path of God or leaving home.

- To cover, to close: In Surah An-Nur 24:31, the verb "daraba" combined with the preposition "bi" takes on the meaning of "to cover."

- To give an example, to draw an analogy: In many places throughout the Quran, it appears in the form "daraba mathal," meaning "to give an example" or "to draw a comparison."

- To strike, to hit: In Surah Muhammad 47:27 and Al-Anfal 8:50, it is used as a physical action; however, in these contexts the action refers to angels striking unbelievers.

This picture reveals an extremely important conclusion: "daraba" has no single, fixed equivalent. The word's meaning is determined by accompanying prepositions, the semantic framework of the context, and the overall discourse of the surah. Therefore, mechanically translating this verb as "to beat" in Surah An-Nisa 4:34 is an inadequate choice both linguistically and contextually.

Analysis of the Concept of Qawwamun

Another contested element of the verse is the phrase "arrijalü qawwamune 'alannisa'i." This phrase has generally been translated as "men are guardians/managers over women" and over time has become a formula expressing the absolute authority of men. However, the etymological analysis of the concept

does not support this interpretation.

The word قَوّٰمُونَ derives from the root ق-و-م (q-w-m). This root carries the following basic meanings in Arabic: to rise, to stand upright, to stand firm, to watch over and protect, to take on responsibility, and to manage. The root in this form evokes both physical uprightness and the abstract assumption of a task or responsibility.

 pattern, further intensifies this root: it means "one who فَعّال derived from the ,قوّام continually and steadily fulfills something, one who undertakes it with dedication." Therefore, قَوّٰمُونَ means "those who constantly watch over, those who act with a sense of responsibility."

Looking at how this concept is used in different parts of the Quran makes the meaning even clearer. In An-Nisa 4:135, the command "kunu qawwamina bilqist" — "be those who constantly uphold justice" — is given; here, qawwam describes one who takes on the responsibility of justice. Similarly, in Al-Ma'idah 5:8, the phrase "qawwamina lillahi shuhada'a bilqist" also foregrounds the word's meaning of responsibility and guardianship.

This linguistic reality demonstrates that the correct translation of the verse should not be "men are dominant over women," but rather "men watch over women and are responsible for their provision." The remainder of the verse provides two justifications for this responsibility: that God has granted different abilities to people, and that men are obligated to spend from their wealth. The enumeration of justifications in this way clearly shows that qawwamiyya is not a privilege but a duty and a burden.

The phrase "فَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ" is also a frequently misinterpreted element in this discussion. The phrase should be understood not as "God has made some superior to others," but as "God has given some different qualities from others." The superiority here does not describe a moral or human hierarchy, but a functional difference determined in the context of material responsibility. Indeed, Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13 explicitly declares that the only true measure of superiority among people is piety (taqwa).

Re-evaluation of the Concept of Nushuz

Another key concept in the verse, نُشُوز (nushuz), has been defined in the vast majority of classical commentaries as a wife's disobedience and rebellion against her husband. This one-sided interpretation contradicts the concept's both etymological and Quranic usage.

The word "nushuz" comes from the root ن-ش-ز (n-sh-z). The basic meanings of this root are: to rise to a high place, to swell, to move away from one's place, rupture, and stubbornness. The word's primary semantic layer contains an image of physical distancing; over time, this image came to also describe a relational rupture.

Looking at the contexts in which the Quran uses nushuz, the concept is seen to carry a neutral quality. In An-Nisa 4:128, the same concept is used to describe the situation where a husband mistreats his wife, withdraws his attention, or considers separation.

In other words, the Quran does not present nushuz as behavior exclusive to women; on the contrary, it uses this concept to express a state of rupture that either party in a marital relationship can experience.

In this context, translating and interpreting "nushuz" solely as "a wife's disobedience" is contrary to both the Quran's overall coherence and the logic of the language. The concept should be understood as "rupture that disrupts the balance in a marital relationship, a state of coldness or incompatibility between spouses," and it should be acknowledged that this state can arise in both women and men.

Three Steps Toward Peace: The Solution Path Proposed by the Verse

The verse proposes a three-stage solution path when nushuz — that is, a state of relational rupture and discord — occurs between spouses. When the sequence and internal logic of these steps are examined, it becomes clear that the verse advocates for peace, not violence.

First Step — Giving counsel: Attempting to resolve the problem in the relationship through direct communication, sincere and constructive dialogue. It is highly meaningful that the Quran places communication and speech in the foreground as this first proposed solution.

Second Step — Separating beds: This is a process in which physical distance provides the parties an opportunity to reassess the situation and clarify their emotional positions. This step is proposed not to legitimize separation, but to give the relationship a chance to heal.

Third Step — Daraba: This is the most debated element of the verse. The majority of classical commentaries have translated this word as "to beat"; however, this preference has brought many questions with it.

If the meaning of "beating" is accepted, the following contradiction arises: the verse first recommends communication, then physical distance, and finally physical violence. Yet violence destroys the relationship of trust; and where there is no trust, voluntary harmony and peace are also impossible. Moreover, the verse immediately afterward says "but if they comply with you, seek no means against them." This expression shows that the expected outcome is a voluntary agreement — and forced obedience is the exact opposite of this outcome.

Returning to the word analysis, it can be seen that "daraba" in this context can be interpreted as "to remove from the home for a period, to live separately temporarily" or "to seek a common solution together." Indeed, in An-Nisa 4:101, the same verb is used in the sense of "to travel, to leave a place." This interpretation is consistent with both the verse's internal coherence and the Quran's general understanding of ethics.

Furthermore, the fact that the verse lists its three proposals with the conjunction "and" suggests that these steps constitute options that can be resorted to in different situations rather than forming a mandatory hierarchy. Which step is preferred in which situation will be determined according to the specific circumstances of the relationship and the needs of the parties.

The Correct Translation of the Verse

In light of the above analyses, a comprehensive translation of Surah An-Nisa 4:34 can be made as follows:

"Men watch over women. For God has given some different abilities from others, from what they have spent of their wealth. Virtuous women are devout. They guard what is hidden as God has protected it regarding their honor and modesty. As for those women whose discord you fear, advise them, separate from them in bed, and finally remove them from the home. But if they comply with you and desist, seek no further means against them. Indeed, God is Most High, Most Great."

This translation is in complete harmony with the ways words are used throughout the Quran, with the verse's internal logic, and with other verses reflecting the Quran's approach to family relationships. Indeed, Surah Ar-Rum 30:21 characterizes the relationship between spouses with "mawadda and rahma" — love and mercy — while Al-Baqarah 2:187 describes spouses as each other's "libas" (garment), meaning shelter and refuge. An interpretation legitimizing violence does not fit within this picture.

The Sociological Background of Traditional Interpretation

The gradual acquisition of authoritarian meanings by the concepts of nushuz and qawwamiyya is not coincidental. The vast majority of the classical commentary tradition was produced in social structures where women's public and legal status was extremely restricted. Within these structures, commentators at times blended the Quran's universal principles with the prevailing customs of the era, and the resulting interpretation gradually gained religious legitimacy.

Yet the Quran adopts a form of address that centers human dignity and reason. In Al-Hujurat 49:13, it is stated that the true criterion between people is piety; in An-Nahl 16:97, it is promised that every person who performs righteous deeds — whether woman or man, equally — will attain a good life. An interpretation incompatible with these universal principles is condemned to remain disconnected from the Quran's holistic message.

Surah An-Nisa 4:34 has for centuries been interpreted to a large extent in an inadequate and decontextualized manner, causing serious misunderstandings regarding Islam's understanding of family and its approach to women. However, an in-depth philological analysis of the concepts "daraba," "qawwamun," and "nushuz" — and their comparative reading alongside their usage throughout the Quran — clearly reveals that the verse's true purpose is not to legitimize violence, but to offer peaceful and gradual solutions to crises in the marital relationship.

The Issue of Looking at What Is Forbidden in the Quran: An Evaluation Free from Superstition

The moral boundaries in Islam have been shaped over centuries by both jurisprudential scholars and social practice. In this process, Quranic verses have at times been interpreted out of context, leading to rulings that the original text never

intended being presented as fundamental rules of the religion. The notion that "looking at the opposite sex is forbidden" is perhaps the most widespread of such interpretations. So what does the Quran actually say on this matter? What can be understood when the verses are examined in their own context?

Surah Al-Isra, Verse 32: Preventing Adultery or Prohibiting the Gaze?

"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." (Al-Isra, 32)

This verse is one of the most frequently cited in arguments that looking at the opposite sex is forbidden. However, to understand the verse correctly, one must first look at its context. Between verses 23 and 38 of Surah Al-Isra, a comprehensive list of Islam's fundamental moral principles is presented. Among these principles are respect for parents, protection of orphans' rights, justice in weights and measures, and avoiding arrogance and pride — a wide range of distinct commandments. The prohibition of approaching adultery is part of this general moral framework.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of the verse is this: it says "do not approach adultery," not simply "do not commit adultery." This phrasing emphasizes that the structural and social ground that leads to adultery must also be eliminated — places where immorality is openly displayed, or the circulation of obscene content in society. Not a single word about looking at the opposite sex appears in this verse. To interpret it in such a way is to push the boundaries of the text's meaning.

Surah An-Nur, Verse 30: What Does "Guarding the Eyes" Mean?

"Tell the believing men to reduce some of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what they do." (An-Nur, 30)

This verse carries particular importance as it contains the most direct expression on the subject. The verse clearly commands "guarding the eyes," but what this command encompasses must be examined carefully. The phrase "refraining from what is forbidden," when considered within the Quran's general use of language, does not carry the meaning of a prohibition limited solely to looking at the opposite sex. Haram (the forbidden) is a broad concept defined across many different contexts in the Quran. Just as pork is forbidden, so too are alcohol, drugs, tobacco, usury, slander, and oppression. In that case, the command to guard one's eyes from the forbidden carries the meaning of turning one's gaze away from anything that could form the basis of any sin. A clear and explicit ruling that looking at the opposite sex is directly forbidden is not present in this verse.

When the Quran intends to declare something forbidden, it uses an exceptionally clear and direct language. Pork has been declared forbidden in unambiguous terms. If looking at the opposite sex were to be placed in the same category, one would expect an equally explicit ruling — and no such ruling exists in the Quran.

Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 52: What Does the Prophet's Attitude Signify?

"Not lawful to you, [O Muhammad], are [any additional] women after [this], nor [is it]

for you to exchange them for [other] wives, even if their beauty were to please you, except what your right hand possesses. And ever is Allah, over all things, an Observer." (Al-Ahzab, 52)

This verse addresses the Prophet Muhammad directly and regulates the rulings concerning his marriages. However, an important detail it contains sheds a different light on the matter: the verse explicitly states that the Prophet could be affected by the beauty of women. The phrase "even if their beauty were to please you" reveals that the Prophet was capable of observing a woman's beauty and making an assessment in that regard. If looking at women were a forbidden act, this would certainly need to have been made clear by the Quran's language, which clarifies even the finest details. Moreover, the Quran states with utmost clarity the prohibition on others marrying the Prophet's wives. No comparable clarity exists on the matter of looking at the opposite sex.

On the Source of the Superstition

So how has such a widespread understanding become so deeply rooted, despite having no basis in the Quran? There are several fundamental reasons.

First, narrations in hadith literature expressing that "looking with desire is considered adultery" have, over time, been over-interpreted to lay the groundwork for prohibiting the act of looking altogether. Yet this expression addresses the matter of intent and desire — it does not categorically prohibit the act of looking.

Second, the social norms of the era were carried into the text within the tradition of Quranic commentary (tafsir). Practices such as the gender segregation in medieval Islamic societies and keeping men and women apart in the public sphere gradually began to be perceived as religious obligations.

Third, when Quranic verses are read piecemeal rather than holistically, a shift in meaning becomes inevitable. When a single verse is read in isolation from the general message of the surah it belongs to and from the entire moral framework of the Quran, it can be pulled toward a different meaning.

The Real Issue: Intent and the Nature of the Gaze

The Quran's understanding of morality encompasses not only actions but also intentions. From this perspective, what is decisive in the matter of the gaze is its quality — that is, the intent behind the gaze and where it leads the individual. If a look directs a person toward evil, adultery, or another sin, it can be said that such a look is problematic. However, this does not mean that every glance at the opposite sex is forbidden. Making eye contact with the opposite sex in the natural flow of daily life, seeing them, or communicating with them is not an act the Quran declares forbidden.

Indeed, in many of the stories told in the Quran, male and female characters are present in the same space, speak to one another, and see one another. The Prophet Moses's encounter with two young women at the well in Midian, and Solomon's meeting with the Queen of Sheba, are just a few examples. In these stories, no emphasis whatsoever is placed on the notion that looking at the opposite sex is

forbidden.

Conclusion

The Quran sets out forbidden rulings in clear and explicit language. An explicit ruling that looking at the opposite sex is forbidden does not appear in the Quran. Surah Al-Isra, verse 32 commands keeping away from adultery and the paths that lead to it. Surah An-Nur, verse 30 advises guarding one's gaze from all that is forbidden. Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 52 demonstrates that the Prophet Muhammad was capable of noticing a woman's beauty, and points to the fact that no separate prohibitive ruling exists on this matter.

This picture shows that the understanding that looking at the opposite sex is directly forbidden was shaped not in the Quran itself, but through historical and cultural processes of interpretation. For a sound understanding of religion, it is necessary to read the Quran holistically and contextually — freed from superstitions, cultural biases, and interpretations torn from their context. What matters is not the quantity of one's gaze, but the purity of one's intention and the effect of one's conduct on public morality.

Marriage Rulings and the Issue of Concubinage in Light of Verses 22-24 of Surah An-Nisa

The Quran offers comprehensive guidance on every aspect of human life. The institution of marriage is one of the most fundamental focal points of this guidance. In particular, verses 22, 23, and 24 of Surah An-Nisa draw clear boundaries regarding the order of marriage, laying the groundwork for the protection of both individual and social morality. These verses have served for centuries as fundamental reference points in Islamic law, playing a decisive role in determining which women may or may not be married, how intra-family relationships should be bounded, and upon which principles the marriage contract should be built. However, in the interpretation of these verses — especially verse 24 — serious deviations have occurred throughout history. Translating the expression "mā malakat aymānukum" as "concubines" or "female slaves" has produced a reading that is both linguistically flawed and contrary to the overall spirit of the Quran.

Surah An-Nisa, Verse 22: The Prohibition of Marrying Women Whom One's Father Has Married

Verse 22 of Surah An-Nisa offers a striking starting point on the matter of marriage prohibitions:

> "And do not marry women whom your fathers have married — except what has already occurred. Indeed, it was an immorality and hateful and was evil as a way."

This verse does not content itself with a single prohibition; it also articulates the nature of that prohibition in remarkably strong terms. Marrying a woman whom one's father has married is not merely rendered legally invalid — it is defined as a moral catastrophe. The expressions used in the verse — fāḥisha (immorality), maqtan (hateful), and sāʾa sabīlā (evil as a way) — demonstrate that this prohibition is not a

mere legal rule but a foundational principle aimed at preserving the moral fabric of society.

The clause "except what has already occurred" reveals that even while imposing firm legal sanctions, the Quran does not resort to retroactive punishment; it treats actions from the pre-Islamic era within their historical context and grants forgiveness. This exception does not, however, mean that such marriages are legitimized — it covers only the forgiveness of the past and the construction of the future.

This verse's prohibition extends beyond the father to include grandfathers as well. A bond arising from a marriage contracted through a grandparent also falls within the scope of this verse, emphasizing that the restriction of intra-family relationships must be maintained across generations.

Surah An-Nisa, Verse 23: A Comprehensive List of Women Forbidden in Marriage

Verse 23 lists in detail the women known in Islamic law as maḥārim — those with whom marriage is categorically forbidden:

> "Prohibited to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your foster mothers who nursed you, your foster sisters, your wives' mothers, your stepdaughters under your guardianship born of your wives unto whom you have gone in — but if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you — and the wives of your sons who are from your own loins, and that you take two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful."

The prohibitions established in this verse can be addressed in several fundamental categories:

1. Those Forbidden by Blood Ties

The prohibition of the mother and daughter is not limited to first-degree relatives. The expression "your mothers" in the verse also encompasses the mother's mother — the grandmother — and even higher generations. Similarly, "your daughters" includes granddaughters and further descendants. These women are close relatives such as one's mother, daughter, sister, paternal aunt, maternal aunt, foster mother, stepdaughters, and mother-in-law. Thus the verse produces a comprehensive regulation that reinforces the marriage prohibition at every level of the family tree.

2. Those Forbidden by Milk Kinship

Islamic law treats relationships formed through breastfeeding as equivalent to blood ties for the purposes of the marriage prohibition. The foster mother and foster sister fall within the scope of this prohibition. This ruling demonstrates how carefully the emotional and physical bonds within the family — the smallest unit of society — are protected. When one considers how widespread the practice of wet-nursing was in early Islamic societies, the vital social function served by this regulation becomes even clearer.

3. Those Forbidden by the Bond of Marriage

In verse 23, the expression "your mothers and daughters" refers both to a person's own mother and daughter and to those women's mothers and daughters — that is, to all of the ascending lineage. In the case of stepdaughters, the verse explicitly states the condition: the prohibition is finalized upon consummation; otherwise, the mere occurrence of a marriage does not give rise to the prohibition. This fine distinction reveals that Islamic law is not a mechanical set of rules, but internalizes a nuanced sense of justice grounded in concrete realities.

4. The Prohibition of Combining Two Sisters

Marrying two sisters simultaneously is absolutely forbidden. This prohibition is designed to protect the naturally warm relationship between sisters from being transformed into an environment of jealousy and conflict.

Surah An-Nisa, Verse 24 and the Correct Reading of "Mā Malakat Aymānukum"

Verse 24, which immediately follows verse 23, extends the scope of the established prohibitions one step further and clarifies the general framework of marriage law:

> "And also prohibited are all married women except those whom your right hands possess — this is the decree of Allah upon you. And lawful to you are all beyond these, that you may seek them with your wealth in a contract of marriage, not in fornication. So for whatever you enjoy of marriage from them, give them their due compensation as an obligation. And there is no blame upon you for what you mutually agree to beyond the obligation. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise."

The expression that especially draws attention in this verse is the Arabic phrase mā malakat aymānukum, which should be translated as "what your oaths possess." Yet throughout history this phrase has undergone a serious distortion and has been rendered in the vast majority of translations as "your concubines" or "the female slaves in your possession."

Linguistic Analysis

The word aymān is the plural of yamīn. In Arabic, yamīn carries the meanings of word, oath, and covenant. Accordingly, the literal meaning of mā malakat aymānukum is "what your oaths possess" — that is, the legitimate relationship established through a marriage contract and mutual vow. This expression refers not to the institution of slavery but to the marriage contract and the covenant between spouses.

The subsequent phrases in the verse — "that you may seek them with your wealth" and "give them their due compensation as an obligation" — further strengthen this interpretation. What is at issue here is not a transaction of purchase and sale, but a marriage contract built upon bridewealth (mahr), responsibility, and mutual consent.

The verse envisions relationships built upon two fundamental principles: chastity and contract. The emphasis on "not in fornication" makes clear that legitimate relationships cannot be established outside of marriage. The obligation of *mahr*

demonstrates that the man bears a material responsibility toward the woman, and that the relationship constitutes a whole of mutual rights and obligations. In this framework, "what your oaths possess" refers to spouses bound by the covenant of marriage — not female slaves or captives.

The Etymology of the Word "Jariya" and Its Historical Transformation

The origin and semantic shift of the word jariya constitutes the most critical dimension of this issue.

The Arabic Root of the Word

The Arabic origin of the word jariya is جَارِيَة (cāriya), derived from the root ج-ر-ي (j-r-y). This root in Arabic contains meanings such as "to flow, to walk, to move, to run." The word's first and original meaning was "flowing, walking, moving." The word cāriya derived from this root originally carried a neutral and positive meaning such as "young girl" or "a woman who moves quickly." Indeed, the words jaryān (flow, current) and jārī (flowing, in effect) derived from the same root still preserve this original meaning today.

Semantic Shift: The Shadow of Roman Law

Understanding the semantic transformation of the word requires considering the historical context. In Roman law, the term concubina defined a woman who was in an extramarital relationship and was not granted the legal status of a wife. These women were in effect in a state of sexual servitude — individuals living in an indeterminate secondary status, devoid of rights. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the rapid expansion of the Islamic world led to intense interaction between Arab society and the Roman and Sasanian legal traditions. In the course of this interaction, the word jariya gradually drifted toward the meaning contained in the Roman concept of concubina and began to be equated with "female slave." This transformation is a deviation that can be explained not by the word's linguistic root but by historical and political circumstances.

The Place of the Word "Jariya" in the Quran

A critically important fact must be emphasized: the word "jariya" does not appear anywhere in the Quran. Its inclusion in translations is nothing other than the reflection upon those translations of the historical semantic drift of Arabic words. Rather than constructing a terminology that would legitimize the institution of slavery, the Quran adopts a language that encourages the liberation of the human being and the escape from bondage.

The Quran's View of Women: Equality, Freedom, and Dignity

The Quran's approach to male-female relations is built not upon slavery but upon a contractual understanding grounded in mutual respect, responsibility, and free will. The characterization of mahr as "an obligation" in verse 24 of Surah An-Nisa makes clear that the man is under a legal duty toward the woman. This approach positions the woman as an equal party to the contract — not as an object purchased, acquired,

or used by the man. The mahr paid in exchange for the rights to be obtained signifies that the relationship rests upon a moral, rather than commercial, foundation.

Beyond this, the Quran contains numerous provisions that transcend slavery and encourage freedom. Regulations prescribing the manumission of slaves for expiation and forgiveness of sins are concrete reflections of this orientation.

When all of this evidence is assessed together, the message at the core of the Quran is clear: respect for human dignity, commitment to justice, and the establishment of equality among individuals.

Conclusion

Verses 22, 23, and 24 of Surah An-Nisa constitute the most fundamental pillars of Islamic marriage law. These verses comprehensively regulate a broad area, from the restriction of family relationships to the principles of the marriage contract. The common purpose of these regulations is to uphold the social order and moral structure.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis may be summarized as follows:

1. There is no provision in the Quran that legitimizes the enslavement of women.

2. The word "jariya" never appears in the Quranic text; its use in translations is a reflection of historical semantic drift.

3. The expression mā malakat aymānukum refers not to the institution of slavery but to the legitimate marital relationship established through a marriage contract and mutual vow.

4. The original root meaning of the word "jariya" is "to flow, to walk"; the meaning of "female slave" was subsequently imposed upon the word, particularly through the influence of Roman law.

5. The Quran founds male-female relationships upon contract, bridewealth, and mutual consent.

All of these facts demonstrate that the concept of "jariya" and the claims of female slavery in Islam are plainly contrary to the essence and message of the Quran. Erroneous interpretations and deliberate distortions that emerged throughout history have cast a shadow over Islam's view of women. Yet the framework offered by the Quran rests upon a universal understanding of justice that places equality, freedom, and human dignity at the center of male-female relations.

Women and Testimony in Islam: Justice and Protection at the Heart of the Quran

Islam's approach to women has been a subject of debate across different circles throughout history. Some have attempted to present certain Quranic regulations as evidence that women are placed in a secondary position, while others have criticized Islam through superficial interpretations without grasping the underlying wisdom of these regulations. Yet when the Quran is examined as a whole, it becomes clear that

the value given to women, the special protection shown to them, and the balance of rights and responsibilities are structured with a far deeper understanding.

Verse 2:282: A Misunderstood Verse

The verse most frequently placed at the center of debates about women's status in the Quran is verse 282 of Surah Al-Baqarah.

> "O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write it between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men available, then a man and two women from those whom you approve as witnesses — so that if one of them errs, the other can remind her…" (Al-Baqarah, 2:282)

This verse, which regulates the matter of debt and testimony, commands that written records be kept for commercial and financial transactions, that these records be written by a just scribe, and that a sufficient number of witnesses be appointed. The testimony arrangement specified in the verse is as follows: if possible, two male witnesses should be appointed; if two men are not available, then one man and two women may be accepted as witnesses.

The traditional interpretation of this passage has arrived at the generalization that "the testimony of one man is equivalent to the testimony of two women." However, this generalization is deeply problematic on both linguistic and contextual grounds. First and foremost, it must be stated that nowhere in the Quran — not in a single verse — does the phrase "the testimony of one man equals the testimony of two women" appear directly. This is not a Quranic ruling; it is a product of juristic reasoning (ijtihad) derived from a particular context. Moreover, this juristic reasoning represents a generalization made by disregarding the specific context of the verse in question.

The Actual Context of the Verse: Deferred Debt and the Difficulty of Testimony

Verse 2:282 does not regulate testimony in a general sense; it regulates a very specific domain: deferred debt relationships. This distinction is critically important. Legal proceedings involving financial interests — money, goods, or commercial disputes — have throughout history always placed significant pressure on the parties involved. Witnesses may face threats from debtors or creditors, social pressure, or economic sanctions. Indeed, this reality is explicitly stated at the end of the verse, where it is especially emphasized that no harm should come to the scribe or the witnesses. This emphasis clearly demonstrates how risky and burdensome the duty of testimony can be.

In an area requiring such a heavy responsibility, Allah showed special consideration for women by placing the primary obligation on men, thereby shielding women from

the most burdensome aspect of this duty. The requirement for two women to testify together, therefore, does not mean that women are "half-minded"; on the contrary, it is an arrangement designed to lighten the burden on women by distributing this responsibility. The presence of one woman alongside another is so that, in the event of an error, they may remind each other, support one another, and not be left alone in the face of social pressure.

The General Framework of Testimony in the Quran: The Principle of Equality

To understand the exceptional nature of verse 2:282, one must look at the Quran's general framework regarding testimony. In many places in the Quran, testimony is regulated without any gender distinction whatsoever. In particular, verses 6–8 of Surah An-Nur present this comprehensive perspective most strikingly. On the matter of false accusations of adultery, the Quran places both men and women in equal standing. When a husband accuses his wife, he must swear an oath four times; the woman, in turn, may refute this oath by swearing her own oath four times in her favor. The woman's oath is fully equivalent to the man's and carries equal legal weight.

This arrangement is critically significant: in matters of chastity — one of the most sensitive and vulnerable areas of life — the Quran grants women complete and absolute equality with men. This reveals the Quran's foundational principle: women and men are equal in spiritual worth and legal capacity. Different regulations introduced in specific areas do not reflect hierarchical superiority, but rather a practical and protective wisdom.

A Critique of the "Half Testimony" Claim

The interpretation that "a woman's testimony is half" — which developed in classical Islamic jurisprudence and particularly in the legal opinions of certain schools of law — contains several serious problems.

First, it lacks a Quranic basis. As noted above, there is no direct statement in the Quran that could serve as explicit grounds for this judgment. The ruling in question is a juristic opinion derived by removing a single verse from its context.

Second, the context is ignored. Verse 2:282 covers a very narrow and specific area pertaining exclusively to the law of obligations. To transform this verse into a universal rule of testimony is to sever it from its own textual context.

Third, it creates internal inconsistency within the Quran. If a woman's testimony were considered half, how could the right of oath granted to women in Surah An-Nur on the matter of false accusations of adultery be explained? The Quran is a whole, and its verses do not contradict one another. A regulation in one area must be evaluated in light of the general principles found in other areas.

Fourth, the social reality of the period of revelation is overlooked. In the society into which the Quran was revealed, women were largely excluded from commercial life. Accordingly, serving as witnesses in deferred debt transactions was both practically difficult for women and fraught with potential risks. The verse took this reality into account and provided ease for women.

The General Framework of the Quran's Approach to Women

Beyond the issue of testimony, when the Quran's approach to women is examined from a holistic perspective, a consistent understanding of protection, value, and equality becomes evident. The Quran treats women and men as fully equal in terms of deeds and moral conduct. The verse "Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer — We will surely cause him to live a good life" (An-Nahl, 16:97) makes clear that gender creates no superiority or inferiority in terms of spiritual worth.

In inheritance law, the institution of the marriage gift (*mahr*), and in marital arrangements, the rights granted to women represent a level of advancement far beyond what many civilizations offered, when examined comparatively. Before Islam, women in Arab society could not inherit, could not own property, and could not object to marriage. The Quran granted women concrete and binding rights in all of these areas.

The Difference Between Protection and Devaluation

The most fundamental error into which some fall is confusing protection with devaluation. To protect someone is not to consider them weak or inadequate; on the contrary, it is an expression of the value placed upon them. When the Quran exempts women from certain burdensome obligations, it does so not because of any deficiency on their part, but because they hold a special value. Just as assigning physically demanding tasks to men is done out of respect for women. The distribution of responsibilities is not a hierarchy, but the product of a search for balance.

Indeed, when viewed from the perspective of moral accountability, the Quran places women and men in equal standing. In fundamental matters such as worship, ethics, responsibility, and spiritual reckoning, there is no gender distinction. The different regulations that appear are rational responses to the conditions of practical life.

Conclusion

Verse 282 of Surah Al-Baqarah is not a ruling that generally demeans women's testimony; quite the contrary, it is a specific arrangement that places women under protection in a difficult and risky legal process. To derive from this verse the generalization that "a woman's testimony is half" lacks a sound foundation on both linguistic and contextual grounds.

The Quran regards women and men as equal in spiritual worth, legal capacity, and moral responsibility. The specific regulations introduced in different areas are not a denial of this equality, but wise responses to the various practical requirements of life. To protect women does not mean to devalue them; on the contrary, it is a concrete manifestation of the value held for them.

It must not be forgotten that traditional juristic opinions are the product of particular historical and social conditions. The Quran's message must be read above those opinions, within its own coherent wholeness. When such a reading is undertaken, it

becomes clear that Islam is a faith tradition that values women, protects them, and provides them with genuine justice.

The True Meaning of the Concept of Houri in the Quran: An Examination from Linguistic and Theological Perspectives

Islam literature has continued to debate the concept of "houri" for centuries. While traditional understanding defines houris as sexual rewards offered to men in paradise, this interpretation has neither a linguistic nor a Quranic foundation.

The Etymology and Grammatical Structure of the Word "Houri"

The word houri is of Arabic origin, rooted in the term "hawar" (h-v-r). In Arabic, the singular forms of the word diverge as follows: ahwar for masculine and *hawrā* for feminine. The plural form is hūr (ḥūr), and notably this plural form is the common plural of both the masculine and feminine singular forms. In other words, the word "hūr" encompasses not only women but is a gender-neutral plural covering both men and women together. In Turkish and Persian, this plural form is used in the singular sense as "huri." This is a transformation commonly encountered in loanwords from Arabic in both languages.

It is important to draw attention to the difference between languages here. Turkish is a genderless language; the pronoun "o" (he/she/it) is used for both men and women as well as inanimate objects. Arabic, on the other hand, has a grammatical masculine/muzakkar and feminine/müennes distinction. Translations made by disregarding this linguistic structure have laid the groundwork for the concept being misinterpreted along gender lines.

The Shared Root Between "Hūr" and "Hawari"

The root of the word, "hawar," appears not only in the Quranic descriptions of paradise but also in the word "hawari," which describes the chosen disciples of our Prophet Jesus. The meanings of the concept of hawari can be listed as follows: chosen, flawless, self-sacrificing companion, friend, one who greatly helps another, a person who dedicates themselves to a cause. This shared root is not coincidental. The semantic framework of the word houri also overlaps with hawari: a loyal, distinguished, pure-hearted friend who shares a spiritual fellowship. Therefore, houri, by origin, evokes friendship, loyalty, and spiritual togetherness before sexuality.

Quranic Usages and the True Meaning

The singular form of the word houri does not appear in the Quran; it occurs only in its plural form in a few places. In these verses, houris are addressed generally in the context of spouses and companions in paradise, with emphasis placed not on sexuality but on purity and cleanliness.

When the words "hūr" and "ῑn" are used together — in the form "ḥūrun ῑnun" — the meaning becomes "those with large, bright eyes." This expression describes the type of eye most admired by Arabs, namely the gazelle eye with very white whites and very dark irises. It is important to note that this depiction is a gender-neutral

description used to express the beauty of both men and women.

Looking at verse 33 of Surah An-Naba, the matter becomes even clearer. In the translation by Ali Bulaç, the word "kaʿaba" in this verse is rendered as "girls whose breasts have just budded," yet the actual meanings of the verb "kaʿaba" are: being striking, dazzling, magnificent, and superior. When the word is used for a person, it means: made that person dazzling, magnificent, or wonderful. The word "atrāb" in the verse means peers, perfect equals. The correct translation of the verse in this context should therefore be: "Young and peer-matched spouses." Any sexual connotation is absent from the original meanings of the words; this meaning was later introduced into the verse from hadith culture.

Spouses in Paradise in the Quran: The Principle of Equality

In various surahs of the Quran, there are explicit statements regarding spouses in paradise. What is striking in these verses is that, without distinguishing between men and women, it is emphasized that believers will be together with "perfectly pure spouses" in paradise. In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 25, it is stated: "And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds; surely for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow... In there they shall have purified spouses." In Surah Al-Imran, verse 15, the phrase "purified spouses... for those of taqwa" is repeated; and in Surah An-Nisa, verse 57, the same emphasis continues. None of these verses contain any indication that the spouses are allocated exclusively to men. On the contrary, it is explicitly stated in many verses that believing men and women will equally benefit from the blessings of paradise. Surah An-Nahl, verse 97, most clearly establishes this equality: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer — We will surely cause them to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do." In Surah Al-Imran, verse 195, it is also stated: "I will not allow the deeds of any of you, male or female, to be lost; you are of one another." This divine declaration openly proclaims that the blessings of paradise will be distributed regardless of gender.

The Contradictions of the Traditionalist Interpretation

While the traditionalist understanding maintains that a man will be with at least 70 houris in paradise, it deems a woman worthy only of her earthly husband. This approach contains a deep internal contradiction. First and foremost, this interpretation is grounded not in the Quran but in hadith literature. The Quran makes no such distinction anywhere. Moreover, this understanding depicts paradise as a male-dominated harem arrangement and positions women merely as a part of this arrangement. Yet one of the fundamental principles of the Quran is that superiority in the sight of God is measured not by gender but by taqwa: "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." (Al-Hujurat, 13)

Another problem with the traditionalist interpretation is its failure to grasp the balance between soul and matter. Paradise is not merely a place where material pleasure is experienced; it is the pinnacle of spiritual maturity. Interpreting the blessings of paradise purely within the framework of bodily desires means narrowing this reality.

Soul, Body, and the Blessings of Paradise

To make sense of life in paradise, it is necessary to correctly understand the soul-body relationship. In worldly life, the soul is bound to a single body. Paradise, on the other hand, is a form of existence where unlimited blessings will be experienced simultaneously. Within this framework, it is possible for a single soul to manifest in many different bodies in paradise. This understanding answers the following question: Will spouses in paradise be together, or will a separate harem be offered to the man? The answer is simple: Spouses will be together. However, in paradise, a spouse represents an infinite togetherness in which the same soul can manifest in different forms. Just as a man's spouse may appear to him in thousands of different forms, a woman's spouse may also manifest to her in countless different ways. This equality is in full harmony with the Quran's principle of justice.

The example of fingers makes this abstract reality concrete: There are ten fingers on two hands. A person can feel all ten fingers simultaneously, because they are all extensions of the same soul. Similarly in paradise, a single soul will be able to experience infinite experiences simultaneously.

An Evaluation in Light of Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 13

In verse 13 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, God says: "So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard; they distort words from their proper usages." This verse describes not only a historical event but a tendency toward deviation that can repeat itself in every age. The detachment of words from their original meanings first seeped into commentaries, then into social perception, and has shadowed the Quran's message across generations. The word houri stands as one of the most striking examples of this distortion. This deeply rooted concept, which expresses friendship, purity, and spiritual togetherness, was over time filtered through hadith and transformed into an image of a sexual reward.

The concept of houri expresses, by origin, purity, distinction, and self-sacrificing friendship. Grammatically, it is a gender-neutral plural; that is, it encompasses not only women but both men and women. Its usage in the Quran describes the pure spouses and companions in paradise. The presentation of the houri in traditional interpretations as a sexual reward exclusive to men contradicts the Quran's principle of justice, the grammatical structure of the word, and the holistic message of the verses. Believing men and women hold equal value and dignity in the sight of God, both in this world and in paradise. The blessings of paradise will be offered fairly without granting privilege to one gender. The houri is not a sexual fantasy; it is a ground of pure friendship and togetherness in the depths of souls, where God is remembered and glorified. Understanding the Quran through the Quran places this concept in its proper position, removes the doubts in the hearts of both women and men, and clearly reveals the infinite justice of God.

An Islamic and Sociological Approach to the Issue of There Being No Female Prophet

Nebihood: A Privilege or a Heavy Burden?

To properly understand the office of prophethood, one must first look at the historical reality of this role. Prophets faced immense physical and psychological pressures while conveying God's true religion. The Quran makes this reality plain in numerous verses. In Surah Ash-Shu'ara 26:153, the accusation directed at the prophet by the polytheists is relayed as follows: "You are only one of those bewitched." Such psychological attacks reveal that prophets did not merely assume a spiritual duty — they were also compelled to withstand harsh accusations, insults, and slander campaigns from all segments of society.

Physical threats were equally inseparable from this picture. In Surah Al-Imran 3:21, the following statement appears regarding the killing of prophets: "Indeed, those who disbelieve in the signs of Allah and kill the prophets without right and kill those who order justice from among the people — give them tidings of a painful punishment." This verse stands as clear testimony that massacres targeting prophets took place throughout history.

Among concrete examples, perhaps the most striking is the casting of the Prophet Ibrahim into fire, recounted in Surah Al-Ankabut 29:24. The fact that a prophet was subjected to being thrown into fire for conveying his message lays bare, in full starkness, the immense cost that prophethood demands.

Women Being Exempt from Prophethood: A Deficiency or a Mercy?

The traditional answer given to this question holds that the matter is not merely one of distributing responsibilities, but rather a divine protection mechanism. When social pressure and resistance are considered, it becomes evident that the attacks prophets faced were not solely physical. Throughout history, polytheistic communities resorted to every weapon available against messages that threatened their traditional religious understanding. Among the most commonly employed of these weapons were moral accusations built around chastity. The slander directed against Aisha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, demonstrates how effectively such attacks could be wielded as a social weapon. A female prophet could have become the most vulnerable target of such a slander mechanism. Viewed within this framework, the exemption of women from the office of prophethood can be read not as a degradation or exclusion, but as a concrete reflection of sensitivity toward women's nature and safety. By exempting women from this role, God protected them from the harshest physical and psychological attacks directed at prophets throughout history.

Reflections in Modern Times

This issue extends far beyond an abstract historical debate and reaches directly into the present day. Pressures directed at those who raise their voices in the religious sphere persist in the modern age as well. The reactions targeting individuals who question the hadith tradition or advocate a Quran-centered approach illustrate this concretely. Some have been demeaned by being depicted as dancers, some have been called mad, and others have received death threats — all for defending the true religion. The existence of individuals who pay this price despite not being prophets reveals the extent to which the historical difficulty of prophethood still resonates

today. It also prompts reflection that, had these individuals been women, the pressures they faced would in all likelihood have manifested in far more severe forms.

Prophet (Nabi) and Messenger (Rasul): A Re-reading Based on the Quran

The second and perhaps more neglected dimension of this issue concerns how the concepts of nabi and rasul should be understood within the holistic framework of the Quran.

The Mistranslation of "Rijal" and Its Consequences

The word "rijal" appearing in Surah Yusuf 12:109 has been rendered in traditional translations overwhelmingly as "men." Yet this word derives from the root r-j-l, whose core meaning is foot, to walk, and to go on foot. The etymological nucleus of the word leads us directly to "a human who walks on their own feet" — pointing not to gender, but to movement and the human condition. In this context, the correct translation of Surah Yusuf 12:109 should read: "We did not send before you except those who walked among the people of towns, to whom We revealed. Have they not traveled through the land and seen how the end of those before them was? And the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah. Will you not then reason?"

The inconsistency of translating rijal as "men" becomes even more apparent when tested against Surah Al-Hajj 22:27. If the word rijal were translated as "men" in that verse, it would yield the meaning: "Announce the pilgrimage to the people; men will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, arriving from every distant pass." This would make the Hajj an obligation exclusive to men, effectively excluding women from one of the fundamental pillars of the religion — a conclusion that plainly contradicts both the Quran-based and the historical practice of Islam. Translating "rijal" as "men" is therefore a choice that undermines the internal consistency of the Quran.

Who Is a Nabi (Prophet)?

The word "nabi" derives from the Arabic root "naba'" (نَبَأ), which carries the meanings of news, important information, and revealed message. A nabi is a person who receives news through divine revelation and conveys that news to people. The most fundamental characteristic of a nabi is being the primary and direct recipient of the divine message. The concept most powerfully associated with the nabi in the Quran is the receiving of a Book. Surah Al-Baqarah 2:213 makes this point explicitly: "Mankind was one community, and Allah sent prophets as bringers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that over which they differed." This verse unambiguously states that the Scripture was sent down together with the prophets.

Who Is a Rasul (Messenger)?

The word "rasul" derives from the root r-s-l (ر-س-ل), which carries the meanings of sending gently and guiding. From the same root, irsal means "to send" and risala means "a sent message." A rasul is, in brief, a person sent with a mission — one who

is obligated to convey the message completely and without alteration. The most noteworthy dimension of the rasul concept is that it is not exclusive to human beings. Surah Al-Hajj 22:75 states: "Allah chooses from the angels messengers and from the people. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing." The characterization of angels as rasul considerably broadens the scope of this concept.

The Contradiction Between the Traditional Definition and the Quran

According to the view systematized through scholars such as Azizuddin al-Nasafi and Ibn Taymiyyah within the classical kalam tradition, particularly the Ash'ari school, a rasul is one who receives a Book while a nabi is one who does not. This definition was accepted as the dominant understanding in Islamic thought for centuries. However, when the Quran's own internal consistency is examined, this definition encounters serious problems on two fundamental points.

The first problem is this: Surah Al-Baqarah 2:213 explicitly states that the Book was sent down together with the prophets. Yet the traditional definition's claim that a nabi does not receive a Book is in direct contradiction with the plain text of the Quran.

The second problem concerns angels: If every rasul receives a Book, then angels assigned with tasks such as taking souls or other duties would also need to have been given a Book. Yet no such statement appears anywhere in the Quran. This reveals the groundlessness of the equation "rasul = one who receives a Book."

The Conclusion That Emerges from the Quran

A holistic reading of the Quran yields the following conclusion: A nabi is a person who receives direct revelation and a Book from Allah. All nabis are simultaneously rasuls, since they are obligated to convey the message they have received to the people. However, not every rasul is a nabi. Rasuls who are not nabis are persons who convey and transmit to people the Book brought by earlier prophets.

Within this framework, it is also evident that the concept of a female rasul is not excluded by the Quran, since the rasul category encompasses a broad enough semantic field to include both angels and human beings who are not nabis.

The issue of there being no female prophet cannot be reduced to a superficial debate about equality — it is far too layered for that. The historical reality clearly demonstrates that the office of prophethood demands severe physical and psychological costs. The exemption of women from this role can be read not as a deficiency in the value Islam assigns to women, but as a divine preference oriented toward their protection.

Furthermore, the traditional definitions of the concepts of nabi and rasul contain elements that conflict with the Quran's own internal logic. The understanding that "rijal" should be rendered as "those who walk" rather than "men" rests on a strong foundation both etymologically and in terms of the Quran's internal consistency. Additionally, the conclusion that all nabis are simultaneously rasuls, but not every rasul is a nabi, emerges naturally from a holistic reading of the Quranic verses.

These analyses once again illuminate how essential it is — for understanding Islam's approach to women and its foundational concepts — not to remain content with mere traditional transmission, but to return to the Quran's own text.

Women's Right to Travel in the Quran: A Philological and Theological Examination of the Word "Saihat"

Throughout Islamic history, the question of women's freedom of travel has been debated primarily on the basis of hadith literature and jurisprudential traditions, while the language and concepts employed by the Quran itself have been largely overlooked. Yet when the Quran is evaluated within its own internal coherence, it becomes clear that it positions women not as passive, homebound figures, but as active, mobile subjects participating in public life.

The Philological Origin and Semantic Field of the Word "Saihat"

Beginning from a linguistic perspective is essential for placing this discussion on sound footing. The word "seyahat" (travel), widely used in Turkish, is not of Turkish origin. When one considers Turkish vowel harmony rules — both the major and minor forms — it becomes immediately apparent that "seyahat," containing both the vowels "e" and "a," violates these rules. This is a clear indicator that the word is of foreign origin. Its root lies in the Arabic "siyaha," which passed into Persian as "seyahat" and from there into Turkish. Another word derived from the same Arabic root is "saihat." There is a subtle but important semantic distinction between the two. While "seyahat" denotes a planned, purposeful journey from one point to another, "saihat" evokes roaming, wandering, and being in a state of free and exploratory movement. In Turkish equivalents, "gezmek" (to travel) is closer to seyahat, while "dolaşmak" (to wander, roam) is closer to saihat. This semantic framework shows that every saihat is a form of seyahat, but not every seyahat qualifies as saihat.

Quranic Verses Containing the Word "Saihat"

Words derived from this root appear in three different verses of the Quran.

The first is the expression "fesihu fil ard" in verse 2 of Surah At-Tawbah, translated as "roam/travel through the land" — containing an explicit emphasis on freedom of movement. The meaning is entirely clear: physical movement, travel, and the exploration of the earth.

The second is the word "saihune" in verse 112 of the same surah. This verse, enumerating the qualities of believing individuals, uses this word to mean "those who roam/travel." Here too there is no semantic ambiguity; "saihune" plainly means individuals who move and travel.

The third — and the one at the center of the debate — is the word "saihatin" in verse 5 of Surah At-Tahrim. In this verse, God says:

"If he divorces you, perhaps his Lord will give him in exchange wives better than you — submissive, faithful, obedient, repentant, worshipful, given to fasting, previously married, and virgins."

Among the qualities listed in this verse, "saihatin" also appears, and the addressees are explicitly women. From a linguistic standpoint, the meaning of this word is unambiguous: women who roam, travel, and move freely. Yet in many Quran translations, this word is rendered as "women who fast."

Semantic Shift or Distortion?

At this point, one must pause and ask: How can it be explained that a word derived from the same root, formed with the same verbal pattern, is accepted as meaning "roaming, traveling" in Surah At-Tawbah, yet is rendered as "fasting" in Surah At-Tahrim — precisely when the addressees are women? The Arabic words for "fasting" in the Quran are "sawm" or "siyam," and neither of these appears in At-Tahrim 5:5. Despite this, the overwhelming majority of translators prefer to render "saihatin" as "fasting women" — a choice that must stem not from linguistic necessity, but from an ideological presupposition. That presupposition is this: women should not roam, should not travel, and their freedom of movement should be restricted. Yet when one examines the Quran's own internal coherence, there is no linguistic or theological justification to support such a distinction. If "saihat" means "one who roams" for men in Surah At-Tawbah, it must carry the same meaning for women in Surah At-Tahrim. Otherwise, what is being done is not interpreting the Quranic text — it is rewriting it.

The Story of Mary: An Independent Female Figure

One of the most powerful concrete examples the Quran offers regarding women and travel is the story of Mary in Surah Maryam. Verse 16 states:

"And mention in the Book, Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east."

This verse depicts a woman withdrawing alone to a place apart from her family — that is, moving independently. Moreover, the Quran presents this not with any criticism or warning, but entirely within a positive framework, as part of a woman's life. No requirement of a male guardian (mahram) accompanying her is stipulated; this solitary journey is not condemned. On the contrary, Mary is presented as one of the most exalted figures in Quranic history. This story goes beyond abstract linguistic debate and serves as a powerful concrete example that gives substance to women's right to travel and independent movement.

The Relationship Between the Right to Travel and Other Fundamental Rights

Restricting women's freedom of travel cannot be reduced to a mere question of "going and coming." Such restriction simultaneously eliminates numerous interconnected fundamental rights.

The right to education is foremost among these. A woman accepted to a university in another city who cannot make the journey alone because she has no male guardian is effectively deprived of her right to education. The right to work is similarly affected. A woman who finds employment in a location different from where she resides, but cannot take advantage of that opportunity, faces one of the greatest obstacles to her economic independence. The right to worship may be the most striking of all. Hajj —

one of the pillars of Islam — cannot be performed by a woman who is unable to travel alone; this amounts to the seizure of both a religious and personal right. At this point, the following question becomes unavoidable: if the traditional view restricting women's travel effectively eliminates these fundamental rights, can it genuinely be argued that this view has a religious foundation?

The Theological Impasse of the Traditional Interpretation

The traditional view holding that women cannot travel alone draws its argument primarily from certain hadith. Yet the Quran, both in its own conceptual wholeness and through the exemplary figures it presents, paints a clear picture incompatible with this restriction. The consistent meaning of "saihat" throughout the Quran, Mary's independent movement, and the general language the Quran uses for believing individuals — active, mobile, thinking subjects — do not permit the positioning of women as passive, confined, and dependent figures.

To perpetuate a traditional restriction by ignoring or distorting the clear expressions of a religion's sacred text does not legitimize that restriction; it only reveals that tradition is being presented as though it were religious obligation.

When the Quran's treatment of the concept of "saihat" is examined, a coherent and transparent semantic whole emerges: regardless of in which verse or toward whom this word is used, it carries the meaning of "an individual who roams, travels, and moves freely." The fact that this word qualifies women in At-Tahrim 5:5 is a direct Quranic affirmation that women, like men, are active, mobile, and independent individuals. Translators who render this word as "fasting women" are not only without linguistic basis — they are also contradicting the Quran's overall semantic coherence.

The story of Mary reinforces this linguistic finding with a concrete example from life. The Quran places women not outside of life, but at its very center. A woman's right to travel is an inseparable part of her right to education and work, her freedom of worship, and most fundamentally, her human dignity. To restrict this right through linguistic manipulation or traditional assumption is to speak with the voice of tradition — not the voice of the Quran.

Can Women Be Leaders? An Evaluation in Light of the Quran and Historical Reality

One of the common beliefs in society is that women are not suited to lead a country. However, this view contradicts both the verses of the Quran and historical reality. When approached from a Quran-centered perspective, it becomes clear that what truly matters in leadership is not gender, but justice, merit, and capability.

The Quran's respectful mention of the Queen of Sheba offers an important example regarding women's leadership. In Surah An-Naml, verse 23, the Queen of Sheba is introduced as follows:

> "Indeed, I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne." (An-Naml, 27:23)

This verse demonstrates that a woman can successfully govern a country and

possess vast resources. In the Quran, the Queen of Sheba is portrayed as an intelligent, consultative, peaceful, and diplomatic leader. Rather than resorting to war, she sought communication with Prophet Solomon, and ultimately accepted the truth and embraced faith. The Quran narrates this conduct with praise — the Queen of Sheba is not criticized, but presented as an exemplary ruler of reason and discernment.

The Quran sets no gender requirement for the role of leadership. The standard is always justice, competence, knowledge, and piety. Indeed, when describing the duties of rulers, no distinction is made between men and women. In this context, leadership is a matter of qualification. What is decisive is not whether one is male or female, but whether one acts according to the standards set by God. Throughout history, it is possible to encounter both successful and unsuccessful leaders among women — just as among men. This shows that success or failure is not related to gender, but to character, knowledge, vision, and justice.

Successful Women Leaders

Angela Merkel (Germany): Governed Germany for 16 years. She ensured economic stability, earned public trust during times of crisis, and was widely admired for her humanitarian stance during the refugee crisis and her modest way of life.

Jacinda Ardern (New Zealand): Her compassionate leadership following the Christchurch attacks, her successful management of the pandemic, and the genuine bond she formed with the public demonstrated that she was an effective leader despite her young age.

The Harm of Leaders Without Merit

Throughout history, many male leaders have also been associated with despotism, corruption, and oppression. Figures such as Muawiya, Yazid, Hitler, and Stalin are among these examples. Leaders who lack merit are intolerant of criticism and can drive their countries to catastrophe. This once again demonstrates that what is decisive in leadership is not gender, but competence.

In the Quran, leadership has not been made exclusive to men — the criteria set are justice, wisdom, consultation, knowledge, and compassion. The example of the Queen of Sheba shows that a woman can be a highly successful and praiseworthy leader. Contemporary examples of successful women leaders further support this. Leadership positions should be evaluated not by gender, but by merit.

Prejudices in society claiming that women cannot be leaders generally stem from historical and cultural patterns. Yet this perspective represents not only a flawed form of social engineering, but also a deviation from the very essence of the Quran. While the Quran acknowledges the differences between men and women as part of creation, it presents these differences not as obstacles to social responsibilities such as leadership, but merely as instruments that do not impede such roles.

According to the Quran, the primary criterion for a human being is not to act against God, to be just, and to govern society by upholding Islamic ethics. Gender is not a

factor that limits a person's capacity to fulfill this responsibility.

The story of the Queen of Sheba not only highlights the role of women in leadership, but also demonstrates that leadership can be achieved not only through military victories, but through diplomacy, reason, and strategy. The Queen of Sheba sent envoys to Prophet Solomon in pursuit of a peaceful resolution. This approach reflects a style of governance based on dialogue and consultation rather than war.

The Quran's portrayal of the Queen of Sheba as a leader who demonstrated not only physical strength but also emotional intelligence, foresight in decision-making, and a sense of responsibility toward her people clearly illustrates women's competence and success in this field. At the same time, this shows that leadership is not solely about "power," but is also deeply connected to justice, wisdom, and compassion.

Beyond the Queen of Sheba, the Quran contains other examples of women displaying qualities of leadership. These examples present women's roles in leadership positions not merely as a social occurrence or cultural shift, but as reflections consistent with God's order of creation. For instance, the wife of Pharaoh stood against his tyranny and displayed her faith and submission to God — a true leader figure. Despite having access to all possible comforts, she chose to oppose a tyrannical ruler and preferred God's approval and justice. This too shows that a woman can act with justice and wisdom even under the most difficult circumstances and the most oppressive of regimes — that she can listen to the voice of her conscience.

The fact that female leaders have been few in number throughout history is a reflection of sexist prejudices and social norms. Women's assumption of leadership roles has frequently been prevented or suppressed throughout history. To understand this, one must look not only at religious and cultural factors, but also at socio-economic ones. Today, however, social perceptions are rapidly changing, and the achievements of women in leadership are being increasingly recognized. Women's roles in leadership are being acknowledged not only in governance, but also in education, business, civil society, and even in the arts and sports. The active participation of women in the public sphere is transforming governance and social structures. How societies adapt to this transformation will provide not only women, but all individuals, with the opportunity to make the most of their potential.

Historical examples that demonstrate women's success in leadership reveal that gender rests on a foundation that transcends the boundaries society has sought to impose on social roles. For example, Queen Elizabeth I of England displayed remarkable political genius over a long reign and transformed England into a great naval power. Despite ruling as a woman, her administrative skills and competence in state affairs were widely admired.

Among modern women leaders, there are also notable examples. Angela Merkel and Jacinda Ardern are among the most recognized women leaders of the modern world. Both have taken significant steps in social equality, humanitarian values, and crisis management. Merkel governed Germany for 16 years, became a powerful figure within the European Union, and earned global respect for her crisis management.

Ardern was remembered as the leader who united her nation following the attack in New Zealand, and made her mark through the successful policies she pursued during the pandemic.

In conclusion, based on the Quran and historical facts, it is clear that gender does not constitute an obstacle to leadership. What matters are the qualities a person possesses — merit, justice, knowledge, and experience. Good or bad governance does not originate from a person's gender, but from how deeply they have internalized these values and how consistently they govern society by them.

The example of the Queen of Sheba shows that women too can be effective leaders, and that in doing so, they must act with reason, wisdom, and justice. Leadership is shaped by one's sense of responsibility toward the people. Beyond being male or female, it is a leader's commitment to their people, their understanding of justice, and their endeavor to lead society toward a better future that determine true success.

Whoever fears God, governs the people with justice, and does not pursue personal gain — that is the person who should lead.

The Headscarf and Veiling in Islam

The veiling of women in Islam is frequently debated as both a social and religious issue. While some view the headscarf as one of the most fundamental symbols of the religion, there is no verse in the Quran that explicitly mandates a headscarf. Although the concept of a covering appears in the Quran, the word "headscarf" is added in translations and leads to differing interpretations in exegesis. The headscarf is accepted in some Muslim communities as a form of dress symbolizing women's religious identity, and this topic frequently comes to the fore. Whether the headscarf is obligatory in Islam, the manner in which women cover themselves, and the meaning of veiling differ across various schools of thought and approaches. However, most claims regarding the headscarf do not rest on rulings explicitly stated in the Quran. In this context, correctly interpreting the relevant Quranic verses is of great importance.

One of the most frequently cited verses on the headscarf is An-Nur 31. This verse offers certain rulings about how women should dress in Islamic society. The verse begins as follows:

> "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts, and not to display their adornments except what is apparent of them. And let them draw their coverings over their chests, and not reveal their adornments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those their right hands possess, or male attendants having no sexual desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornments. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed." (An-Nur, 31)

This verse does not make it obligatory for women to wear a headscarf; rather, it

obliges them not to display their adornments and intimate areas to strangers. The verse contains not "headscarf" but "covering," and this covering is to be drawn over the chest. The term "headscarf" does not appear directly in the verse. The word "humur" used here means covering in a general sense — it means to cover, wrap, or conceal something. The word "bihumurihinne" in the verse is derived from the root "khimar," which means covering. In terms of its Arabic meaning, "khimar" does not mean headscarf; it means covering in a general sense. Throughout the verse, the word "covering" is used instead of "headscarf." Since this word has been understood as headscarf, it is necessary to examine it in detail.

Bihumurihinne is a genitive noun with a feminine plural pronoun suffix, beginning with a preposition: bi (with/by), humur (plural of khimar, meaning "coverings"), and hinna (third-person feminine plural pronoun meaning "their"). Together it means "their coverings." It derives from the root h-m-r, which carries the meanings of covering, concealing, and hiding. Khimar in its singular form means "covering." The phrase walyaḍribna biḥumurihinna ʿalā juyūbihinna literally means "and let them draw their coverings over their chests" — clearly indicating that it is the chest, not the head, that must be covered. Therefore, the correct translation of the verse would be "and let them draw their coverings over their chests."

The expressions "lower their gaze and guard their private parts" in An-Nur 31 are a warning regarding women's privacy. The fundamental purpose here is to protect women's freedom and dignity. Furthermore, the ruling "not to display their adornments except what is apparent of them" indicates that women should not display their adornments to outsiders, but this is not a statement that makes the headscarf obligatory.

One point where the headscarf issue is misunderstood is that some hadiths and incorrect interpretations are used to support this claim. In the Islamic world, there are arguments that the headscarf originates not from the Quran but from hadiths. Nevertheless, there is no explicit ruling on the headscarf in the Quran. Some commentators have attempted to associate the verse with the headscarf using fabricated hadiths and mistranslations. However, the deficiencies, logical errors, and contradictions with the Quran in these interpretations make it difficult to derive a headscarf ruling from the Quran.

Another common misconception is the claim that the word "jilbab" in Al-Ahzab 59 encompasses the headscarf. In fact, jilbab refers to a garment that covers a woman's entire body. There is no ruling concerning the headscarf in this verse.

A Quranic and Hadith-Based Examination of Women's Adornments and Privacy

The issue of women's dress and adornment has historically been subject to many different interpretations in Islamic society. However, to gain the most accurate perspective on this matter, it is necessary to examine the explicit expressions of the Quran. The matters related to women's "ziynat" (adornment) and "privacy" mentioned in the Quran have at times been raised with differing interpretations, leading to misunderstandings and fanatical practices.

The word "ziynat" in the Quran, translated into English as "adornment," generally refers to things related to visual aesthetics such as jewelry and clothing. However, the meaning of this word can vary according to context. In some Quranic verses, particularly those pertaining to women, the word "ziynat" carries the purpose of beautification, but what is intended here is not only external beauty but also inner maturity and propriety.

In Al-A'raf 31 ("O Children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of prayer..."), "ziynat" is used to encompass jewelry and ornaments. Here Allah presents "adornments" as a beauty for His servants. In Al-A'raf 32, with the expression "Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good things of provision?", it is indicated that adornments have been made lawful by Allah. This underlines that adornments are in fact blessings.

An-Nur 31 contains explicit rulings on how women should conduct themselves. The verse states that women may show their adornments only to those close to them, except in certain places. Although some individuals incorrectly associate this expression of "adornments" solely with jewelry and beads, the context of the verse is actually far deeper and refers to women's intimate areas. The verse commands women to conceal their intimate parts — such as their genitals and breasts — from everyone except permitted persons. The relevant portion of the verse reads:

> "...and not reveal their adornments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husbands' fathers, or their sons, or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those their right hands possess, or male attendants having no sexual desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women..." (An-Nur, 31)

Here the expression "adornments" encompasses not only a woman's physical jewelry but also the intimate areas that define her privacy. The reference to "intimate areas" in the verse can be seen as a correction against the misunderstanding of the word "ziynat" — meaning what must be covered — at the beginning of the verse. The verse permits women to show their adornments only to those they need, and only within appropriate limits.

Interpretations regarding what "ziynat" refers to and what kind of covering is required have at times led to great misunderstanding. Some scholars have interpreted "ziynat" as referring to a woman's entire body, leading to the mistaken notion that a woman's whole body must be covered. Yet the Quran, rather than commanding women to cover their entire bodies, asks them only to cover their intimate parts — that is, their genitals and breasts.

Additionally, some fabricated hadiths have produced interpretations suggesting that women must wear a headscarf and that this is explicitly stated in the Quran. However, An-Nur 31 contains no expression concerning the headscarf. This verse does not directly command women to cover their heads. This situation reveals how fanatics and certain cultural elements have deviated from the true meaning of the Quran and applied false interpretations in order to more strictly control women.

Some hadiths used in connection with the headscarf clearly contradict the Quran. For example, according to a hadith narrated by Aisha, when the "verse of modesty" was revealed, the female emigrants cut a piece from their skirts and covered their heads. However, this narration demonstrates an inauthentic addition made to argue that women must cover their bodies. The contradictions within hadiths show inconsistencies with Quranic accounts and have also caused confusion regarding the obligation of the headscarf. Yet in verses such as those of Al-A'raf and An-Nur, it can be seen that women need only conceal their adornments from certain persons, and that there is no explicit command concerning the headscarf.

The Fundamental Principles of the Quran and Prohibitions

In Islam, prohibitions and permissions have been determined very clearly by Allah. For example, while Al-Baqarah 173 states that pork is forbidden, this ruling is an absolute and indisputable divine command: "He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced by necessity, neither desiring nor transgressing, there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Al-Baqarah, 173). The expression "has forbidden" in this verse clearly indicates that Muslims should have no doubt on this matter.

Similarly, regarding usury (riba), Al-Baqarah 275 contains a very clear ruling: "Those who consume interest cannot stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, 'Trade is just like interest.' But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. Whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns — those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally." (Al-Baqarah, 275).

In both examples, the ruling given by the Quran has been communicated in an unequivocal and definitive manner. This helps us understand Islam's stance on permitted and forbidden matters. However, some traditional approaches have deviated from these clear Quranic expressions, introducing different interpretations and additions. This is particularly evident in interpretations concerning women's dress.

Traditional Interpretations on Women's Bodies and Dress

Women's bodies and dress have been frequently debated, particularly by some fanatical approaches, and different rulings have been issued on this matter. The idea that women must cover themselves generally stems from the belief that the female body is arousing to men and that women therefore need to be concealed. However, the Quran's understanding of chastity is related to a person's conscience and morality — not to external appearance, but to the moral values within a person.

Moreover, what a man looks at in a woman is her face, not her hair. Even if her hair were golden, a man who values appearance might not even want to marry her if her face is unattractive. Furthermore, in such a case, the situation of arousal could also arise in the absence of knowing the gender — for example, when viewing from behind

a long-haired man. As the author notes: "I myself am a man, and no woman's hair has any effect on me whatsoever. This is the case for all men. However, while arousal from hair does not occur, arousal can arise in the case of men whose hearts contain disease, in situations of speaking softly."

While the Quran issues definitive rulings regarding women's dress, these rulings are generally aimed at ensuring women's safety in society and protecting their chastity. For example, Al-Ahzab 59 states that women should draw their outer garments around them:

> "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves part of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (Al-Ahzab, 59)

In this verse, it is expressed that women should wear a jilbab (a covering far broader in scope than a headscarf). The jilbab is a garment that covers a woman's entire body. Although the word "headscarf" does not appear in the Quran, some exegetes have incorrectly interpreted this verse as referring to a headscarf. However, this interpretation does not accurately reflect the Quran's message. The Quran wants women to fully cover their bodies and to move freely in society. It is clear that this dress aims to ensure that women are recognized and not harmed in society.

Some traditional commentators have distorted the Quran's message according to their own sectarian understanding, developing restrictive interpretations such as that women should not go outside and should remain confined at home. These interpretations overlook the Quran's message emphasizing a moral approach and conscientious responsibility. According to the Quran, there is no distinction between women and men in terms of moral responsibility. Chastity is a responsibility applicable to both sexes. Al-Ahzab 35 states that men and women are equally required to be chaste:

> "...men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity..." (Al-Ahzab, 35)

This verse clearly expresses that both sexes must be moral and chaste. However, fanatical approaches have focused excessively on women's dress and have overlooked the fact that morality is an inner value. Covering a woman's body should not be seen merely as an external measure; more importantly, this decision must be made through a woman's reason, conscience, and faith. A woman's covering is her inner choice and should be made by herself, independently of societal pressures.

In the modern world, debates over women's dress have taken on a different dimension. Concepts such as women's freedom, the right to make decisions about one's own body, individual rights, and equality come to the fore. According to the Quran, what will determine whether a woman behaves chastely is not her external appearance but the fear of Allah and morality within her. A verse in the Quran — "...so that Allah may know those who fear Him unseen..." (Al-Ma'idah, 94) — indicates that people are responsible to Allah not only in public but also in private. In this context,

Islam's essential message to women is that she should lead a life free from external pressures, with her inner values and moral responsibilities at the forefront.

A woman's decision to cover her head, like any personal preference, should be made in line with her inner conscience and belief.

In conclusion, covering in Islam is not the headscarf — it is the covering of the genitals. While the Quran recommends covering for women, it simultaneously aims to protect their freedom, dignity, and privacy. The issue of women's adornment and covering is a delicate and important matter in Islam; however, the incorrect interpretations and hadith-based additions made on this subject have caused a deviation from the essence of the Quran. It is not possible to find an explicit command in the Quran stating that women must cover themselves with a headscarf. Instead, respect for women's privacy is emphasized, and it is stressed that women should display their adornments only within a certain framework. In this context, it should be understood that "adornments" are not related to jewelry, but that women's intimate areas must be concealed. However, headscarf impositions based on false interpretations originate from a reading that departs from the essence of the Quran.

Women's freedom in Islam should be ensured by respecting their privacy and by maintaining a balanced protection of their inner and outer beauty. Going beyond traditional and fanatical approaches regarding women's dress in Islam and correctly understanding the Quran's message is necessary. The Quran wants women to be chaste and to move freely, but it does not impose pressure on a woman's body to achieve this. The responsibility of chastity between men and women is equal, and Islam, in fulfilling this responsibility, foregrounds the person's conscience, reason, and devotion to Allah. Women's dress is a personal choice, and each individual must make their own decision, independent of societal pressures.

Chastity: A Virtue Belonging Not Only to Women, But to All of Humanity

In the collective social memory, the concept of chastity has been coded almost exclusively as a virtue defined through the female body and female behavior. While a woman's clothing, posture, voice, and even her laughter have been placed among its criteria, men have largely been excluded from this moral equation. Yet such an understanding directly contradicts both religious teachings and the basic sense of justice. Chastity is a holistic moral stance belonging to the essence of the human being, with no distinction of gender.

The Distortion of the Concept: How Was Chastity Loaded onto Women?

Throughout historical and cultural processes, many societies placed the burden of moral order on women's shoulders. According to this understanding, it was assumed that women carry the family's honor, while men either "protect" or "threaten" it. In this way, chastity came to be measured by a woman's clothing, whether she left the house, her voice, her laughter.

The most glaring contradiction of this distorted understanding can be seen here: the effort to regulate male behavior has never followed the restrictions society imposed

on women in the name of chastity with equal measure. The customers of brothels, casinos, and the sex industry are men. Yet how much space does this reality find in societal discussions of chastity? Almost none. Because the understanding that elevates women as the symbol of chastity effectively exempts men from this responsibility. This situation clearly reveals just how selectively and politically the concept of chastity has been used.

The Quran's Order: First, Men

The Quran delivers its commands concerning chastity in a remarkably striking sequence. In verse 30 of Surah An-Nur, the first address is to believing men:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their chastity. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do."

Immediately after this, in verse 31, a similar responsibility is directed toward believing women. The Quran's ordering is no coincidence. Within a reality where male chastity is often overlooked by society, the revelation first addressing men is deeply meaningful. In this sequence, Allah essentially corrects a historical distortion, reminding us that moral responsibility should first be sought in those who hold physical and social power.

This command encompasses not only a bodily restraint but also a mental and spiritual discipline. The phrase "lower their gaze" indicates that even one's gaze is a domain of moral responsibility. In other words, chastity begins not merely with action, but with intention and with the eyes.

The Story of Joseph: The Quran's Model of Male Chastity

The most striking and detailed example of chastity the Quran offers belongs to a man: the Prophet Joseph. Verse 24 of Surah Yusuf lays this out with complete clarity:

"And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her had he not seen the proof of his Lord. And thus it was that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our sincere servants."

What is notable in this verse is that the Quran does not conceal Joseph's human desire. The verse openly acknowledges that he too experienced feelings. But what makes Joseph exemplary is not the absence of desire, but the stance he displayed despite that desire. With Allah's help, he did not submit to his lower self, and emerged from this trial as a servant possessing sincerity.

This story teaches us several fundamental truths:

First: Men are also tested with carnal desires. This trial is not exclusive to women. The Quran does not conceal this truth; on the contrary, it states it openly.

Second: Chastity is not the absence of feeling. It is recognizing one's feelings, yet being able to keep them within the boundaries Allah has set. Joseph is presented not as a robotic being, but as a human who experiences emotions yet directs those emotions through his faith.

Third: Joseph's passing of this trial stems not from individual strength, but from his devotion to Allah. The phrase "had he not seen the proof of his Lord" reminds us that remaining chaste also requires divine grace and assistance.

Fourth: Joseph is defined through this behavior as a person of *ikhlas* — that is, sincere and purified. This means that worth in the sight of Allah is measured not by gender, but by intention and action.

The detail in Surah Yusuf — the longest surah in the Quran — is an entirely deliberate choice. The revelation selected a man as its central character embodying chastity and depicted this man being tested by desires. This choice proclaims throughout all of history that chastity does not belong to women alone.

The Breadth of Chastity: Not Merely Sexuality

Associating the concept of chastity solely with sexuality is itself a form of reductionism. In its true sense, chastity is a multi-dimensional, holistic moral stance.

Chastity in thought means not occupying the mind with impure desires, hatred, or obsession. A person faces trials not only of the body but of the mind.

Chastity in speech means purifying the tongue of hurtful, degrading, or lustful expressions. The culture of slang, sexualized humor, and degradation spreading across social media today are concrete examples of verbal unchastity.

Chastity in relationships means respecting the boundaries of the other person, not exploiting trust, and not turning a relationship into a means of exploitation.

Chastity in consumption means using one's resources in moderation, keeping away from gluttony and extravagance. In the Quran, wastefulness is also defined as a moral corruption.

Chastity in power means using one's physical superiority or position not to oppress others, but to protect and establish justice.

When considered in this breadth, chastity becomes the moral standard not only of the body, but of thought, speech, relationship, and authority as well. And this standard applies equally to men and women.

The Normalization of Male Unchastity: A Cultural Crisis

Today, popular culture — particularly for men — presents the language of "desiring," "acquiring," and "conquering" as normal, even praiseworthy qualities. The cinema and music industry most often position women as objects and men as the subjects who acquire those objects. Sexual irresponsibility, polygamy, and the free expression of lust are regarded as markers of masculinity; exploitation is even normalized at times.

This understanding harms men both individually and collectively. A man who cannot manage his desires, who is a prisoner of his lower self, stands in direct opposition to the model of strong manhood the Quran presents. The manhood exemplified by Joseph is built not on sexual irresponsibility, but on patience, sincerity, and self-

discipline. The truly strong man is not one who submits to his desire, but one who can keep his desire within Allah's boundaries. This distinction is not merely a matter of individual virtue; it is a cornerstone of social morality.

Moral Justice: No One Is Exempt by Virtue of Gender

The foundational principle in the Quran's understanding of morality is individual responsibility. Allah looks at every servant's heart, intention, and action. No gender is exempt from this accounting. Whether woman or man, everyone is tested by their own lower self, and each participates in the outcome of that trial through their own conduct.

This principle brings with it a critically important equality: if female unchastity is a social problem, then male unchastity is equally a social problem. If women bear moral responsibility, so do men. When this balance is not observed, the moral fabric of society collapses at its foundation.

No matter how much a woman covers herself, a man whose intention is corrupt will not be stopped by that clothing. This means the moral solution must be sought not in the female body, but in society's mentality, its education, and the redefinition of male identity.

The Need for a New Model of Manhood

What society needs today is a new and healthy definition of manhood. This definition should encompass the following qualities:

- A man who uses his physical strength not to oppress women but to protect them and establish justice in society.

- A man who can manage his emotions rather than suppress them, and who is capable of empathy.

- A man who can keep his sexual desire within the boundaries Allah has set.

- A man who carries his responsibility not only within the family but also in his social relationships.

The story of Joseph is the concrete expression of this model in the Quran. Despite being handsome, he was not arrogant; despite being desired, he did not exploit; despite being trapped, he did not lose his dignity. This integrity reveals not only his chastity but the depth of his character.

Chastity Is About Intention, Not Gender

Loading chastity solely onto women contradicts the Quran's clear commands, the message conveyed by the story of the Prophet Joseph, and the basic principle of justice. The Quran directed its command of chastity first to men, held up a man as its symbol of chastity, and in no verse restricted this virtue to a single gender.

True social purification and the construction of sound morality will only be possible

when both women and men embrace this virtue with equal responsibility. Otherwise, the efforts of women will continue to be overshadowed by the irresponsibility of men.

The story of Joseph teaches us this: the one who is valued in the sight of Allah is the servant who abandons submission to desire, takes refuge in their Lord, and chooses to remain chaste in their inner world. Individuals who act with this awareness — and societies shaped by this awareness — can alone be truly and genuinely moral.

Let it never be forgotten: chastity is about intention, not gender; about inner devotion, not outward appearance.

Women and Creation in the Quran: The Theological and Cultural Depth of the "Farmland" Metaphor

Throughout human history, women's fertility and the source of creation have been addressed across a wide spectrum — from mythological narratives to philosophical systems, from divine texts to works of art. These themes reflect not merely a biological reality, but humanity's search for the meaning of existence. The Quran reinterprets this deep-rooted tradition through a monotheistic lens, presenting the creation of humanity and women's fertility as concrete manifestations of God's power in the world. In this context, verse 223 of Surah Al-Baqarah carries an exceptionally layered meaning — historically, theologically, and culturally.

The Vegetal Creation of Humanity: A Journey from Earth to Soul

The Quran conveys the creation of humanity as an interconnected, gradual process. In Surah Fatir it is declared: "He created you from dust, then from a drop of fluid, then He made you into couples." This verse expresses that human existence begins with earth, takes shape through water, and finds meaning as pairs. In Surah Nuh, this creation is described as follows: "God caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it and bring you out again." Read together, these two verses reveal that human existence has not a linear but a cyclical structure: emergence from earth, return to earth, and resurrection.

In this sense, the human being resembles a plant — more than an animal — in its existential journey. Just as a seed is planted in suitable soil, nourished by water, takes root, and eventually bears fruit, the human being is part of a similar process. The womb corresponds to soil; sperm to the seed deposited in that soil; amniotic fluid to the water that nourishes it; and the soul to the divine breath that gives that seed life. This comparison is not merely a literary figure of speech — it articulates an ontological reality. The essence of life lies not in the chemical combination of atoms, but in the manifestation of God's command "kun fayakun" — "Be, and it is" — within that being. The human body originates physically from earth; the soul comes into existence through divine grace.

Baqarah 2:223 and the Multi-Layered Meaning of the "Farmland" Metaphor

"Your women are a farmland for you. So approach your farmland however you wish. And send ahead for yourselves. And fear God, and know that you will meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers."

This verse is among the most debated and most misunderstood verses in Islamic thought. Although it is often interpreted in Western and atheist circles as reducing women to an object, a deep layer of meaning — pointing to the exact opposite — emerges when the context of the text, the Arabic word choices, and the Quran's general teaching are taken into account.

The word at the center of the verse, "hars," is translated into English as "farmland" or "field." However, this word encompasses not merely a piece of land, but also productivity, the potential for abundance, the continuity of life's cycle, and the reward for labor. In agricultural societies, the field is a place where life continues, where labor finds meaning, and where generations are nourished. Describing women through this metaphor is not a degradation — it is placing her at the center of life, at the source of abundance, in the role of bearer of generational continuity.

Moreover, when the verse is read in its entirety, it is clear that it addresses not only sexuality but its moral and spiritual dimensions as well. The phrase "fear God" indicates that this union must be lived with a sense of responsibility; the warning "you will meet Him" reminds that every action carries its reckoning in the afterlife. Thus, sexuality in the Quran moves beyond being a matter of mere pleasure and becomes a sacred trust intertwined with spiritual responsibility. The verse's final line — "give glad tidings to the believers" — is a reward granted to those who carry this responsibility and live the marital relationship with God-consciousness. When all these elements are considered together, it becomes clear that far from devaluing women, the verse places the respect owed to her upon a divine foundation.

Women and Earth: A Deep-Rooted Bond Stretching from Mythology to the Quran

The identification of women's fertility with the earth is not an approach unique to the Quran. It is a deeply rooted universal motif extending to the oldest civilizations in human history. In Sumerian mythology, Ninhursag is the life-giving "earth mother," goddess of both birth and fertile land. Anatolia's Cybele represents the cyclical power of life and nature as the great mother goddess. Egypt's Isis, as guardian of death and rebirth, symbolizes the transformative power of women. India's Prithvi is the earth itself; Greece's Demeter is the goddess of the earth and the abundance of the harvest. What these figures share is that they position women not as an "object" or "tool," but as a "source" and "center." In these narratives, woman is the essence of life, abundance, and continuity.

The Quran inherits this rich symbolic legacy but carries it into a monotheistic framework. Women's fertility is no longer a "goddess power" but the manifestation of God's creative might in the human world. This transformation does not eliminate women's status; on the contrary, it places her upon a firmer and deeper foundation.

Women, the Moon, and Cosmic Cyclicality

Throughout history, many cultures have identified women with the moon. The basis of this analogy lies in the alignment of women's biological cycle with the lunar calendar — yet the meaning is not solely biological. The moon gives light in darkness, shows direction, gives meaning to the night. Similarly, women bring a new life into

being in the dark and unknown beginning of existence — namely, in the womb. The figures of Parvati in Hindu mythology, Selene in Greek tradition, Luna in Roman, and Mahina in Hawaiian culture exalt women as beings who illuminate, bring peace, and symbolize cyclicality. In Chinese philosophy's Yin-Yang understanding, the "yin" principle represents the feminine: dark, moist, receptive, transformative. This principle is not a deficiency or weakness, but an essential pole that sustains the balance of existence. To receive, to transform, to produce, to nurture — these are the qualities of yin, and they simultaneously define woman's existential mission.

When the Quran's "farmland" metaphor is read in parallel with this cosmic framework, the meaning deepens further. Women are not merely bearers of a biological productivity, but of a cosmic function that sustains the balance of creation. She is an indispensable note in the divine symphony that ensures the continuity of existence.

A Theological Reading: Piety, Trust, and Accountability

The theological depth of Baqarah 2:223 is not limited to the "farmland" metaphor alone. When the verse is read in its entirety, it becomes clear how the Quran frames sexuality. In this verse, sexuality is addressed in three fundamental dimensions: biological productivity, moral responsibility, and awareness of the afterlife.

The command "fear God" expresses that the relationship must be lived with consent, respect, and consciousness. This call to piety emphasizes that the female body is a trust to be approached not carelessly but with care. The reminder "you will meet Him" reveals that every action carries a divine reckoning, and that this reckoning encompasses even the most intimate spheres of daily life. Thus, sexual union ceases to be a means of pleasure and becomes a conscious and responsible form of participation in God's plan of creation.

Viewed from this perspective, the verse stands not as a text that devalues women, but as one that underscores that respect for her is a divine requirement.

Woman, at the Center of Existence

The Quran's description of women as "farmland" may, on a surface reading, appear to be an expression prone to misunderstanding. However, reading this metaphor within its historical, cultural, and theological context reveals an entirely different picture. In this verse, women are not an object, but a symbol of the place where life is sustained, where abundance exists, and where lineage continues. The human being is a "seed" created from earth; women is the "womb-soil" that grows that seed. Both are different manifestations of God's command "kun fayakun."

The emergence of the human from earth and return to it, alongside the continuation of the lineage that comes forth from women's womb — these are two faces of the same divine cycle. In this verse, women is patient and productive like the earth, purifying and life-giving like water, and in darkness a guide and source of peace like the moon.

Modern critiques most often remain on the surface by interpreting this figurative language literally. Yet the Quran presents women as a "source of abundance" in both

the biological and spiritual sense. The "farmland" analogy is a metaphor that does not diminish women — it places her at the center of existence and honors her fertility and productivity.

To put it in the Quran's own terms: women are the most beautiful and most profound manifestation of God's power, mercy, and creation in this world.

Dabbe and Mahdi: Hearing the Voice of the Quran Anew

The Figures of Dabbe and Mahdi in Islamic Eschatological Tradition

Among the figures discussed in the context of end-times signs in the Islamic intellectual tradition, Dabbe and Mahdi have been subject to varying interpretations, mythological narratives, and theological debates for centuries. Over time, both concepts have been stripped of their original meanings and turned into instruments of political, social, and sectarian discourse. Yet when one returns to the literal text of the Quran and the early exegetical tradition, it becomes clear that the primary function of these figures is to direct people toward the signs of Allah.

Dabbe: A Philological and Quranic Framework

The word dabbe derives from the Arabic root d-b-b, meaning "something that moves or crawls along the ground; a living creature." In the Quran, this word appears fourteen times in the singular and four times in its plural form dawabb. In the vast majority of singular uses, it refers broadly to living creatures on earth. However, in verse 82 of Surah An-Naml, the concept is elevated far beyond this general meaning, acquiring a specific and eschatological significance:

> "And when the word befalls them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them, that the people were not certain of Our signs." (An-Naml, 27:82)

Several elements in this verse deserve attention. First, the Dabbe emerges from the earth — suggesting it will arise from within the ordinary and the familiar. Second, it speaks — meaning it is capable of human communication. Third, and most critically, is the content of what it says: it confronts people with the fact that they did not believe in Allah's signs. This is the function not of an animal, but of a conscious messenger. Classical commentators often approached this verse within a literal framework, depicting Dabbe as a strange creature described with physical characteristics. Yet the context of the verse exposes the inadequacy of this approach, for the Dabbe's essential action is to speak, to remind, and to confront — acts that point to consciousness and will.

Mahdi: Conceptual Origins and Islamic Context

The word Mahdi comes from the Arabic root h-d-y and carries the meanings of "one who has been guided" or "one who guides to the right path." It is known that the concept existed in pre-Islamic Sabian tradition, where Mahdi was envisioned as a savior figure who would appear in times of endless oppression and lead humanity to salvation. Its entry into Islam came through hadith literature — the name "Mahdi"

does not appear directly in the Quran. Nevertheless, the Quran contains numerous verses relating to hidayah (guidance). One of these, verse 123 of Surah Ta-Ha, clearly expresses the existence of divine guidance for humanity:

> "He said: Descend from it, all of you. Some of you are enemies of others. So if guidance comes to you from Me — then whoever follows My guidance will not go astray and will not suffer." (Ta-Ha, 20:123)

This verse emphasizes that hidayah comes from Allah. The person who serves as a vehicle for guidance is a mediator who carries and delivers this divine message. The concept of Mahdi is precisely this function in personified form — not a magical savior, but a figure of proclamation who directs people toward Allah's message and purifies them from deviation.

Dabbe and Mahdi in Hadith Literature

The hadith corpus contains extremely detailed and often mutually contradictory narrations regarding the figure of Mahdi — including fabricated accounts concerning his lineage, physical appearance, the geography of his emergence, and the duration of his mission. While all such hadith are fabricated, an examination of the hadith relating to Dabbe reveals the human identity of the Dabbe. In a narration transmitted in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad (2:91), it is stated that the Dabbe will carry the staff of our Prophet Moses and the seal of the Messenger Solomon, that the faces of believers will be illuminated, and that disbelievers will be branded with this seal.

Two important observations can be made from these narrations. First, the functions attributed to Dabbe and Mahdi are largely overlapping: both separate people according to their beliefs, distinguish truth from falsehood, and recall the divine message. Second, the hadith literature increasingly mythologizes these figures, distancing them from the Quran's plain framework of proclamation and transforming them into savior archetypes endowed with supernatural powers.

The Thesis of the Identity of Dabbe and Mahdi

The thesis that Dabbe and Mahdi are two different names for the same person — or two names given to the same figure by two different traditions — rests on several foundational arguments.

Functional overlap: Both figures call people to true faith, diagnose deviation, and direct attention to the Quran. There is no essential difference between Dabbe "telling people they did not believe in the signs" and Mahdi "correcting corrupted religious understanding."

Terminological divergence: The term Dabbe is Quranic; the term Mahdi is rooted in fabricated hadith literature. This amounts to nothing more than the same figure being named differently in two distinct epistemic sources.

Unity of mission: Both figures are commissioned to convey the divine message, break false patterns of belief, and direct people toward Allah's word alone. The singularity of this mission points to the essential singularity of the figures.

In this context, it is possible to say: the figure mythologized under the name Mahdi is the same proclaimer the Quran calls Dabbe. And the Dabbe is not a "sacred hero" or a "miraculous savior" — but rather a person who confronts people with their disbelief, calls them to have faith in the signs, and does so by taking the Quran alone as his basis.

Historical Corruption: Severance from the Source of the Message

Throughout Islamic history, religious understanding has progressively distanced itself from its original source — the Quran — and this gap has been filled by hadith collections, jurisprudential schools, Sufi interpretations, and political discourses. This process has profoundly affected how both Dabbe and Mahdi are understood.

The expectation of the Mahdi has throughout history been turned into a tool of legitimacy for political power struggles. The Abbasids, Fatimids, and many political movements identified themselves or their leaders as the Mahdi, stripping the concept of its original meaning and giving it an ideological function. Meanwhile, in the Sufi tradition, Mahdi was transformed into an esoteric figure of salvation, and communal structures did not hesitate to cast their own leaders in this role.

This state of affairs has an inevitable consequence: when a true Mahdi — or by his true name, a Dabbe — appears, communities will oppose rather than recognize him. For every community has established its own tradition and its own leader as the criterion of truth. A figure whose teachings do not conform to existing communal understandings will not be recognized — he will be rejected, or even targeted. Indeed, even our Prophet Muhammad could not save people from hellfire; many insisted on their own beliefs despite his proclamation. To imagine that a non-prophet savior would accomplish this task more easily is both logically and Quranically inconsistent.

The Limits of Hadith Scholarship and the Sufficiency of the Quran

Another critical point in the matter of Mahdi and Dabbe concerns the epistemic standing of fabricated hadith literature. In traditional belief, hadith are accepted as the second foundational source of the religion. However, there is broad academic consensus that hadith narrations — especially those concerning end-times signs — have been severely contaminated by fabrication and exaggeration throughout history.

In this context, the following question is of vital importance: when the Quran and hadith draw different pictures on a given topic, which is authoritative? From a Quran-centered reading perspective, the answer is clear: the Quran is always sufficient.

The function of Dabbe as depicted in Surah An-Naml 82 must be regarded as a more reliable source than the depictions found in fabricated hadith literature. The function the Quran assigns to Dabbe is proclamation: to tell people that they did not believe in the signs. This is an entirely simple, comprehensible, and human task. The functions hadith attribute to it — branding, illuminating faces — draw a fabricated portrait of supernatural power. The difference between the two portraits is directly related to which source one reads the matter from.

The Message of Dabbe in the Contemporary Context

In today's world, the symbolic value of the Dabbe figure is extraordinarily high. Whether millions of Muslims even read the Quran is beyond debate — whether they understand it is doubtful. The religious knowledge of the vast majority is fed by the sermons of community leaders, centuries of fabricated hadith, cultural practices, and intra-sectarian traditions. In this landscape, the Quran has largely become a text that is recited but not understood — whose Arabic wording is repeated but whose message is not enacted in life.

The accusation Dabbe voices in An-Naml 82 targets precisely this situation: "The people did not believe in Our signs." This is both a general diagnosis of unbelief and a concrete assessment of severance from the divine message.

The contemporary counterpart of this figure — called Dabbe or Mahdi — is a proclaimer who returns people to the Quran; who independently of sectarian and traditional authority places Allah's word at the center and regards it as sufficient; and who makes this call not through war, force, or miracles, but through the self-evidencing persuasive power of truth and speech.

Conclusion

Dabbe and Mahdi are two figures in Islam's eschatological tradition who overlap with each other and, at their core, share the same mission. Dabbe, as a Quranic concept, points to a proclaimer who reminds people that they do not believe in the signs. Mahdi is the name given to this figure by fabricated hadith tradition — yet over time it has been severed from its original function through mythological and political discourses.

Restoring these two figures to their original meanings is possible only by connecting them not to miracles and heroic saviors, but to a proclamatory function that directs humanity directly to the Quran and its simple and clear message.

The true message is this: People do not have faith in the signs. And to voice this truth, to confront them with it, and to invite them to Allah's word alone — this is the sole mission of the Mahdi, that is, the Dabbe.

People of the Book and the Question of Salvation from the Qur'anic Perspective

The Universal and Historical Meaning of Islam

The word Islam means "submission to God." This submission did not begin with the prophethood of Muhammad. The Qur'an declares that all prophets called humanity to the same fundamental truth: submission to God. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and many others made this call, and the Qur'an describes all of them as "Muslim" — that is, those who submit to God.

This is a crucial point. The People of the Book's faith in their prophets is rooted in the same divine source. The Qur'an does not reject them wholesale; on the contrary, it explicitly acknowledges that some among them are on the right path. As Surah Al-Imran 3:113 conveys: "Not all of the People of the Book are alike. Among them is a community that stands in prayer through the night, reciting God's revelations and

prostrating."

Baqarah 2:62 and Ma'idah 5:69: The Religious Framework of the Promise of Paradise

Two foundational verses lie at the heart of this matter:

Baqarah 2:62: "Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jewish, and the Christians, and the Sabians — whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does righteous deeds — they shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Ma'idah 5:69: "Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jewish, and the Sabians, and the Christians — whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does righteous deeds — no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve."

These two verses, appearing in two separate surahs, mutually reinforce the same divine message. Three conditions for salvation are explicitly stated:

- Genuine faith in God

- Belief in the Last Day

- Righteous deeds

None of these conditions include recognizing Prophet Muhammad or performing rituals in the name of any particular community. The Qur'an here emphasizes the quality of faith and action over religious affiliation. Interpretations that restrict these verses solely to the People of the Book living during the Prophet Muhammad's time struggle to find textual grounding — no such limitation is present in the wording or context of the verses.

Isra' 17:15: No Accountability Without the Message Reaching

Perhaps the most decisive verse on the question of salvation is Surah Al-Isra' 17:15:

"We never punish until We have sent a messenger."

This verse establishes a foundational principle of divine justice: holding a community accountable before a messenger has reached them is incompatible with God's sense of justice. This ruling applies not only to past nations but to all times and places.

Within this framework, consider the following: millions of people throughout history have lived without any knowledge of Islam. Much of Western Europe, Scandinavia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Far East, Japan, the Americas, and many other regions were entirely unaware of Islam during its early centuries. To say that these people would be punished for not following a religion they had no knowledge of directly contradicts the clear ruling of Isra' 17:15.

Communities Distant from Technology: The Amish, Hasidic Jews, and Mennonites

Even in the modern era, communities exist that are either unaware of Islam or have been exposed only to severely distorted portrayals of it:

The Amish: A Christian community in the United States that largely rejects modern technology — electricity, motor vehicles, and the internet. They live by deeply held religious and moral values in a simple, community-centered way of life.

Hasidic Jews: Communities that consciously distance themselves from the internet and digital media, maintaining their traditional religious lifestyle in a manner largely insulated from the modern world.

Mennonites: Certain subgroups of this Christian community apply strict restrictions on technology, living in a similar state of isolation.

When we consider that these communities are either unaware of Islam or have access only to filtered, distorted information about it, an unavoidable question arises: Would God send these people to Hell simply because they are not Muslim? The Qur'an's understanding of justice and the plain text of Isra' 17:15 point toward the answer: no. These people did not choose their beliefs when they came into the world.

Faith Received at Birth and Divine Justice

The fact that a person cannot choose the environment into which they are born is theologically significant. When a child is born into an Amish family, a Hasidic community, or a Mennonite congregation, that is not their choice — it is an outcome of God's decree. Within the Qur'an's broader moral logic, holding a person accountable for circumstances that formed entirely outside their own will is incompatible with divine justice.

Surah An-Nisa' 4:48 establishes a critical principle in this context:

"Indeed, God does not forgive associating partners with Him, but He forgives anything less than that to whoever He wills."

The core ruling is clear: shirk (associating partners with God) is unforgivable, but sins other than shirk may be forgiven by God's will. The question then becomes: is a Jew or Christian who sincerely believes in the one God and does righteous deeds guilty of shirk? If these individuals genuinely believe in God and do not associate partners with Him, then the ruling of Nisa' 4:48 carries a door of hope for them as well.

The Question of Shirk: A Shared Emphasis in the Qur'an and the Bible

Nisa' 4:48 explicitly states that the only unforgivable sin is shirk. A similar statement exists in the Bible. Luke 12:10 conveys the following: "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."

A theological observation on the concept of the Holy Spirit: Surah As-Sajdah 32:9 states that God breathed into the human being from "His Spirit." The Spirit is not God Himself, but His spirit. Within this framework, it can be argued that the unforgivable sin referenced in both the Qur'an and the Bible points to the same underlying truth: associating partners with God — that is, shirk. This represents a meaningful indication that the fundamental moral core of both scriptures converges.

The Correct Understanding of the "Do Not Take as Allies" Verses

Qur'anic verses often translated as "do not take Jews and Christians as friends" are frequently interpreted out of context. The Arabic word awliya' carries not only the meaning of "friend" but also "guide," "master," and "authority figure." To fully understand this prohibition, it must be read alongside the following reality: the very same Qur'an permits Muslims to marry from the People of the Book and to eat their food. Marrying someone and sharing their table represents the most intimate and binding social ties of human life. Since the Qur'an permits these bonds, it does not categorize the People of the Book as wholly "other." The term wali should therefore be understood as a caution regarding religious guidance and political authority — a principle of guidance meant to preserve Muslim identity and belief, not a call to sever all human and social relations with the People of the Book.

Ma'idah 5:82–83 and the Call to Dialogue

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:82–83 draws a strikingly positive picture regarding a portion of the People of the Book:

"You will surely find that the most intense in hatred toward the believers are the Jews and those who associate partners with God. And you will surely find that the nearest in affection to the believers are those who say 'We are Christians' — because among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant. When they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize, saying: 'Our Lord, we believe — so record us among the witnesses.'"

This passage does not signal a blanket rejection of the People of the Book, but rather a recognition of those among them who are genuinely open to truth.

The Qur'an also makes a direct appeal to the People of the Book in Al-Imran 3:64:

"Say: O People of the Book, come to a word that is common between us and you — that we worship none but God, that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us takes others as lords beside God."

This is a call for common ground, declaring that the shared foundation is tawhid — the oneness of God.

The Qur'an's Justice-Centered and Tawhid-Based Understanding of Salvation

Reading the Qur'an from a holistic perspective, the following picture emerges:

First, the criterion of salvation is not ethnic or religious group membership, but sincere faith in God, belief in the afterlife, and righteous deeds. This criterion is explicitly stated in Baqarah 2:62 and Ma'idah 5:69.

Second, there is no accountability without the message reaching. Isra' 17:15 establishes this as a universal principle. Communities that have no knowledge of Prophet Muhammad, or have access only to distorted information about Islam, cannot justly be held responsible for that ignorance.

Third, the only sin God will not forgive is shirk. Those who do not associate partners with God, who sincerely believe in Him, and who live a moral life — their accounting belongs to God alone.

Fourth, a person cannot choose the environment into which they are born. Punishing a servant of God for the belief system into which they were born entirely outside their own will fundamentally contradicts the Qur'an's understanding of justice.

Fifth, the Qur'an does not wholesale reject the People of the Book. It acknowledges the existence of those among them who are rightly guided, calls for dialogue and peace with them, and even states that Christians are the community closest to the believers.

In light of these realities, it can be said: the Qur'an's message supports not a narrow group theology, but a broad, inclusive, and justice-centered understanding of salvation. To definitively determine who enters Paradise and who does not is the prerogative of God alone, not of human beings. Yet, drawing from the Qur'an's own wording, it is religiously consistent to say this: for one who sincerely believes in God, associates no partners with Him, and lives a moral life — regardless of which community they come from — the door of hope that the Qur'an offers is not closed.

Translation: Whether the Holy Scriptures Have Been Altered: An Evaluation from the Quranic Perspective

The question of whether holy scriptures have changed over time is a significant topic of debate, particularly in the Islamic world. These discussions have been shaped by the examination of relevant Quranic verses, the interpretations of early Islamic scholars, and historical contexts. Certain Quranic verses contain various expressions related to the alteration or corruption of previous scriptures, which has brought different interpretations to the fore.

The word tahrif is derived from the word harf, which literally means "edge, boundary, margin." The concept has generally been used in the following senses:

1. Interpreting a statement in two different ways and pulling it to one side,

2. Replacing the meaning of a word or statement with a similar meaning,

3. Changing the wording of a statement without corrupting its meaning.

These definitions appear in sources such as al-Isfahani's Mufradat (p. 228), Ibn Manzur's Lisan al-Arab (vol. IX, p. 43), and al-Jurjani's Ta'rifat (p. 53). In the Quran, the word tahrif is used in the sense of misinterpreting words or corrupting their meanings. Tahrif can be defined as misdirecting a word or statement in a wrong direction — that is, changing its meaning. In the Quran, the word tahrif appears particularly as a criticism directed at the Jews and Christians, known as the People of the Book. This concept occurs in Surah Al-Baqarah 2:75, Surah An-Nisa 4:46, and Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:13 and 5:41. These verses particularly emphasize the wrongful displacement of words and the alteration of their meanings. However, the important point to note here is that tahrif generally relates not so much to the alteration of the

earlier scriptures themselves, but rather to the misinterpretation of these scriptures or the disregarding of their teachings.

In the Quran, the word tahrif is used both in the sense of distorting the meanings of words and in the sense of twisting language. In Surah An-Nisa 4:46, the criticism is directed at Jews who twisted words to insult the Prophet Muhammad. This is a matter of misinterpreting religious texts, not of altering holy scriptures. In Surah Ali 'Imran 3:78, certain individuals are criticized for reading religious texts and presenting them incorrectly, interpreting them for their own benefit. Here, the issue is not the corruption of the Torah and Gospel, but their misinterpretation and use in accordance with personal interests.

The Quran is accepted as a book that confirms the previous scriptures. At the same time, the Quran contains various criticisms regarding the Torah and the Gospel. The question of whether the Torah and Gospel have been altered is widely debated in the Islamic world. In Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:45–68, it is emphasized that the Torah and Gospel were not applied correctly, and that those who acted contrary to them are criticized. Here the issue raised is not the alteration of these books, but the failure to apply them correctly. Therefore, according to Islam, the focus of the Quranic criticisms is not the alteration of the Torah and Gospel, but acting contrary to the rulings of these books.

In Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:66, it is stated that no change has been made to the content of the Torah and Gospel, but that the requirements of these books have not been fulfilled. This is not a tahrif of the content of the earlier books, but relates to their failure to be applied correctly. Furthermore, in Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:47, it is stated that the people of the Gospel will have gone astray if they do not judge by what Allah has revealed.

The Quran establishes a confirmatory relationship with the previous books. In Surah Ali 'Imran 3:3, the expression "He sent down the Book to you in truth, confirming what was before it, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel" clearly sets out the Quran's relationship with the previous books. Moreover, the verse says "what is in their hands," implying the content of the Torah and Gospel is fundamentally accepted as correct, though their misinterpretation and misapplication is a situation criticized in the Quran. Therefore, rather than saying that the Quran declares the earlier books to have been altered, we can say that it expresses that these books have not been applied correctly.

According to the Quran, the earlier holy scriptures have not been completely altered. At this point, two different possibilities arise:

1. These books may have been partially altered.

2. These books have not been altered, but have been misinterpreted or misapplied.

In Surah Ali 'Imran 3:3, it is stated that the Quran was sent as a confirmer of what the People of the Book have in their hands. This shows that the content of the previous books has not been corrupted — they have only been misinterpreted. This approach

acknowledges that some portions of the earlier holy scriptures may have changed through translations over time, but that their original teachings have not been corrupted. Additionally, in Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:43, the failure to apply the Torah correctly is criticized, and in verse 66, it is stated that these books must be applied correctly. This is further evidence showing that the content of the earlier books has not changed, but they have not been properly applied.

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:75

"Do you hope that they will believe you, while a group of them used to hear the word of Allah and then distort it knowingly after they had understood it?"

The expression yuharrifunahu used in this verse means "the misinterpretation of Allah's word." What is meant here is that a segment of the People of the Book twisted Allah's verses for their own benefit — that is, they distorted the verses just as some Muslims do.

Surah An-Nisa 4:46

"Among the Jews are those who distort words from their proper usages and say, 'We hear and disobey' and 'Hear, may you not hear' and 'Ra'ina,' twisting their tongues and defaming the religion. And if they had said, 'We hear and obey' and 'Wait for us to understand,' it would have been better for them and more suitable. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, except for a few."

In this verse, it is stated that the Jews twisted words for the purpose of insult and imprecation against the Prophet Muhammad. The context of the verse concerns misinterpretation and distortion, rather than any literal change to the holy scriptures.

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:13

"So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort words from their proper usages and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded. And you will still observe deceit among them, except a few of them. But pardon them and overlook — indeed, Allah loves the doers of good."

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:41

"O Messenger, let not those who hasten into disbelief grieve you — of those who say with their mouths 'We believe' but their hearts do not believe — and of the Jews. They are avid listeners to falsehood, listening to another people who have not come to you. They distort words beyond their usages, saying 'If you are given this, take it; but if you are not given it, then beware.' And for whom Allah intends fitnah — never will you possess anything for him against Allah. Those are the ones for whom Allah does not intend to purify their hearts. For them in this world is disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment."

In these verses as well, what is criticized is not a literal textual change but the forgetting and misinterpretation of Allah's commands.

Another concept used in relation to tahrif is tebdil (tabdil). Tabdil means "to put

something in another place," "to corrupt," "to change, to misinterpret, to distort its meaning." In Surah Al-Baqarah 2:59 and Surah Al-A'raf 7:162, it is stated that the Children of Israel replaced the words Allah had commanded them with other words. However, here too, the emphasis is on disobedience to Allah's commands rather than the alteration of holy texts.

The Quran has a role of confirming the previous holy scriptures:

“He sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming what is in their hands. And He had sent down the Torah and the Gospel.”(Surah Ali 'Imran 3:3)

Furthermore, certain verses in the Quran are seen to parallel expressions in the Torah and Gospel:

- Torah: Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:45 corresponds with the "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" law found in today's Torah (Exodus 21:23–25).

- Psalms (Zabur): In Surah Al-Anbiya 21:105, the expression "the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants" is identical to the 29th verse of Psalm 37 in the Psalms.

- Gospel: Surah Al-Fath 48:29 explains that believers are likened in the Gospel to a growing seedling, and this parable is found in Matthew 13:1–43.

"Say, 'Bring the Torah and recite it, if you should be truthful.'" (Surah Ali 'Imran 3:93)

This verse shows that the Torah was still a valid source during the period in which the Quran was written. Similarly, the following verse concerning the ruling of the Gospel is quite illuminating:

"And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein." (Surah Al -Ma'idah 5:47)

These verses clearly express that Allah's words are preserved and that the Torah and Gospel are accepted as reliable sources.

The strongest evidence that the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel have not changed is the strict warnings given for the preservation of these texts. For example:

- Deuteronomy 4:2: "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it."

- Deuteronomy 12:32: "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it."

These warnings show that the texts were considered too sacred to be changed. Moreover, for texts to be altered, every copy would need to be collected and all believers would need to remain silent about it. However, this scenario is historically and practically impossible.

Most of those who put forward claims of tahrif are unable to present concrete evidence to support these claims. Frequently, we encounter unanswered arguments

such as "I don't know, I just heard so." However, claiming that a holy scripture has been corrupted is an enormous claim, and such a claim needs to be supported by strong evidence. In this context, the following verse from the Quran is quite striking:

"And let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient." (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:47)

This verse shows that the Gospel in the hands of Christians during the period in which the Quran was written was valid and reliable. If the Gospel had been corrupted at that time, it would be inconceivable that Allah would reveal such a verse. This is incompatible with Allah's wisdom and power.

The strongest evidence against claims of alteration consists of historical manuscripts and archaeological findings. There are thousands of ancient manuscripts proving that the Gospel has not changed. There are more than 5,000 ancient Greek manuscripts dating back to the first centuries after the life of Jesus Christ, and more than 9,000 manuscripts in other languages such as Latin and Syriac. Moreover, the dense Gospel quotations in the writings of the early church leaders are of a quality that could reconstruct the text of the Gospel almost completely.

As an example, the five-porticoed structure of the Pool of Bethesda mentioned in the Gospel was regarded with skepticism for many years, but archaeologists uncovered this structure exactly as described in the Gospel. Likewise, place names and historical details mentioned in the Gospel have been verified without any room for error. All 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 islands mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles have been verified archaeologically and geographically.

Dead Sea Scrolls: The manuscripts found in the Qumran Caves in 1947 prove that the text of the Torah has not changed for thousands of years. These texts, dated between 200 BC and AD 70, correspond exactly with the modern Torah text.

Ebla Tablets: These tablets confirm the customs and culture of the period in which the events described in the Gospel took place.

Pilate Inscription: This inscription containing the name of Pontius Pilate supports the existence of a historical figure mentioned in the Gospel.

City of Troy: Another archaeological discovery that indirectly supports the historical reality of certain events mentioned in the Gospel.

There are three major denominations in Christianity: Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants. Although the differences among these denominations are well known, there is no difference among them concerning the text of the Gospel. If one denomination had altered the Gospel, the others would have objected to it.

Common Text: The Gospel copies used today contain the same text across denominations. This shows that no single denomination made a change on its own.

Another important factor showing that the text of the Gospel has not been corrupted

is the internal consistency of the text. If changes had been made to the Gospel, those changes would inevitably have created contradictions within the text itself. However, anyone who reads the Gospel carefully can see that the text has a fluent, consistent, and logical structure.

Some claim that the Gospel was altered at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. However, this contradicts historical facts. The text of the Gospel was not discussed at the Council of Nicaea; only theological matters concerning the nature of Jesus Christ were addressed. If changes had been made to the text, this would have been met with the reaction of the early Christians who were tortured and killed for their faith. Yet there is no record of any such event having occurred. The fact that no dispute was recorded at the Council concerning the text of the Gospel shows that the text retained its integrity and authority.

By the 7th century AD, Christianity had spread to all corners of the world and the Gospel had been translated into many languages. During this period, Gospel copies existed in different regions of the world. If a change had been made to these holy texts, it would have been very difficult for that change to spread across the entire world and for everyone to remain silent about it.

The Importance of Geographical Distribution: Christianity had spread to the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Under the conditions of that era, it was impossible to simultaneously alter and distribute texts across such a vast geography.

The Language Problem: Since the Gospel had been translated into different languages, a change made in one language would need to be reflected in copies in other languages as well. However, the harmony among copies in different languages proves that such a change did not occur.

The Torah and Psalms are holy texts accepted by both Jews and Christians. Today, the Torah and Psalms in the hands of Jews are the same as those used by Christians. If a change had been made to these texts, a major conflict between the two religions would have been expected. However, the fact that the texts remain the same refutes the claims of alteration.

In conclusion, there is no definitive ruling in the Quran that the Torah and Gospel have been completely corrupted. On the contrary, many verses of the Quran emphasize that these books were revealed by Allah and that when properly applied they guide humanity. The Quran states that a group among the People of the Book misinterpreted Allah's verses and concealed certain commands. The Quran does not state that the entirety of the Torah and Gospel has been corrupted.

For this reason, two conclusions can be drawn from the Quranic perspective on the corruption of the Torah and Gospel:

1. The Torah and Gospel have been misinterpreted, concealed, and subjected to incorrect translations.

2. The original message of these books has been preserved and, when applied correctly, carries Allah's guidance.

According to Islam, the issue of the corruption of holy scriptures is actually related to the misinterpretation or misapplication of the earlier books. The Quran confirms the previous books and indicates that their content is correct. However, the misinterpretation of these books over time, or their incorrect presentation by people, is regarded as tahrif. The criticisms the Quran makes regarding the Torah and Gospel relate not to the alteration of the content of these books, but to the failure to apply them correctly. Therefore, when the question of whether the holy scriptures have been altered is examined from an Islamic perspective, it pertains not to the content of the earlier books but to their misinterpretation.

The claims that the Gospel, the Torah, and the Psalms have been altered are supported neither historically nor logically. On the contrary, thousands of ancient manuscripts, archaeological findings, and the consistency of the text prove the reliability of the holy scriptures. The Quranic verses also support the validity of the holy scriptures. These texts have been preserved and remained the same for thousands of years under Allah's protective power. For a change to be made by human hands, numerous geographical, linguistic, and denominational obstacles would have had to be overcome — which was impossible under the conditions of that era. The fact that the holy texts have not changed once again proves the truth and reliability of Allah's words.

The same situation happened with the Quran as well. The Quran was incorrectly translated. Exegesis was produced. The words occurring in the verses were concealed — especially by those who accept the hadith — and other words were inserted in their place. For example, "morning Quran" was replaced with "morning prayer." The positions of words were shifted.

"And do not be among those who deny the signs of Allah, or you will be among the losers." (Surah Yunus 10:95)

In conclusion, the Quran confirms the existence, correctness, and divine origin of the previous holy scriptures. However, it informs us that these books have been subject to tahrif — not in their literal wording, but in terms of interpretation and application. The tahrif emphasized in the verses is more the distortion of divine teachings for personal interests. Therefore, according to the Quran, tahrif is not so much a textual corruption as it is a contextual deviation.

Questions for Those Who Claim the Holy Scriptures Have Been Altered

Those who claim that the holy scriptures have been altered must answer the following questions:

1. Is the matter on which the Quranic criticisms focus the corruption of the content of the earlier books, or the failure to properly apply the rulings of these books?

2. Would you allow the leaders of your community to alter your books? Your community leader is an ordinary human being. Are the words of Allah more important, or the words of your community leader?

3. Just as there are wicked people in every era, are there not also good people? Who

are the People of the Book mentioned in Surah Ali 'Imran 3:113–114 — those who prostrate themselves in the night hours reading Allah's verses? If these books had been corrupted, why would Allah describe them as a righteous community? Do these verses not indicate that the earlier books have not actually been corrupted? "They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book is a community standing, reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and they prostrate. They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous."

4. Does the statement in Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:82 — that Christians are the nearest in affection to the believers — not indicate that the essence of the Gospel has not changed? If the Gospel had been completely altered, how could this love and closeness be explained? "You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers to be the Jews and those who associate others with Allah; and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, 'We are Christians.' That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant."

5. In Surah Al-Hadid 57:27, it is stated that compassion and mercy were placed in the hearts of those who followed Jesus. Is this verse not evidence that the disciples did not alter the Gospel? Is it possible that this community, remembered for compassion and mercy, would corrupt a holy text? Does this community not also strive to raise its own children as devout Christians?

6. Why are those who follow these books called "righteous" rather than "misguided"? Does this not show that when one adheres to the essence of the holy scriptures, a correct path is possible?

7. In the Quran, the Torah and Gospel are criticized for not being applied, but their content is affirmed as correct (Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:47, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:66). If the Quran approves of the rulings of these books, does the claim that these books have been altered not contradict this Quranic confirmation?

Satan, Iblis, and the Trial Given to Humanity

Throughout human history, every society and every religion has featured a principle of evil, a dark figure. In Islamic belief, the concepts of "satan" and "Iblis" stand at the center of this figure. However, these concepts have become so overlaid with mythological elements drawn from non-Islamic sources that the original message has become difficult to perceive. The Quran, by contrast, offers an extremely clear, consistent, and rational framework on this subject. Here, we will examine these concepts through a Quran-centered lens, discussing how false beliefs and practices have taken shape and what stance humanity ought to take in response.

The Linguistic and Semantic Dimension of the Concept of Satan

To truly understand any concept, one must first look to language. The word "satan" derives from the Arabic root sh-t-n, whose core meaning is "to move away, to deviate, to become estranged." The verb shatana, derived from this root, carries the sense of

"to be distant." Thus, "satan" refers to a being or person who has moved away from truth and goodness, who leads people astray, and who is deceptive and treacherous.

The most important point to note here is that the Quran does not use the word "satan" as a proper name exclusive to a single being — namely Iblis. The Quran defines satan as a general attribute that can emerge from both jinn and humans. This perspective must be kept in mind: alongside satans from among the jinn, there are also those among humans who go astray and lead others astray. Indeed, the Quran warns:

> "O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of satan. Whoever follows the footsteps of satan — indeed, he commands indecency and wrongdoing." (An-Nur: 21)

This verse commands not merely protection from a metaphysical entity, but keeping away from every kind of misleading influence.

The Figure of Satan in the Shared Memory of Religions

The concept of satan is not unique to Islam. Throughout history, prophets have spoken of this being in their own native languages. In the Torah, the Hebrew word Satan (שָׂטָן) means "one who opposes, an enemy, one who obstructs." In the Book of Job, it appears as a figure who comes before God and requests permission to test Job. Meanwhile, Nachash (נָחָשׁ) — "the serpent" — represents the being that deceived Adam and his spouse.

In Christianity, "Beelzebub" (Βεελζεβούλ), meaning "prince of demons," appears as the symbol of evil. These different narratives all point to the same underlying truth: in every society there is a force that strives to lead people astray, and the necessity of standing firm against that force. Though the religion may change, this fundamental tension remains constant.

Similarly, even though the concept of Dajjal is rooted in fabricated hadiths, it should be understood within this framework. Derived from the Arabic root dajala (دجل), meaning "to cover, to conceal the truth, to gild," the Dajjal is the great deceiver who veils reality. Its plural form is dajjalun or dajjaliyyun, and throughout history it has been used to refer to great liars. Like satan, the Dajjal points not to a single individual but to a typology of those who conceal truth and deceive people.

The Identity of Iblis: Angel or Jinn?

This matter contains one of the most critical misunderstandings in Islamic history. The Quran leaves no room for ambiguity here. Surah Al-Kahf, verse 50, is unequivocal:

> "And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam,' they prostrated — except Iblis. He was of the jinn, and he defied the command of his Lord."

This verse establishes beyond dispute that Iblis is from among the jinn. The jinn, like humans, are beings possessed of free will; they may outwardly comply with commands or they may rebel. Angels, by contrast, belong to an entirely different category. In Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6, angels are described as beings "who do not

disobey Allah in what He commands them, and who carry out what they are ordered."

Rebellion, therefore, is incompatible with the nature of an angel.

So why has Iblis sometimes been perceived as an angel? The answer lies in the Arabic rhetorical device known as taghlīb — a form of expression in which a minority is mentioned under a term representing the majority. Iblis being mentioned alongside the angels does not mean he was an angel; it merely indicates that he was present in that setting.

This false belief draws largely from the figure of Azazel in Jewish mythology. Azazel, mentioned in Leviticus 16:10, was gradually interpreted as a "fallen angel" in Jewish Kabbalah and Western esotericism. This belief seeped into Christianity and from there into Islamic culture, where it was grafted onto Iblis under the name "Azazil," constructing a false perception. Yet this name appears nowhere in the Quran, and no verse states that satan was an angel.

Examining the matter from the standpoint of logical consistency, the following contradictions emerge: Angels do not possess free will and therefore cannot rebel. Iblis, however, clearly did rebel. The jinn, like humans, possess free will and can defy Allah's commands — a fact entirely consistent with Al-Kahf 50. A being is either an angel or a jinn; these two categories cannot transform into one another. All of these contradictions support the conclusion that Iblis is from the jinn.

The Analogy of Iblis and Its Reflections on Humanity

Iblis's greatest error was not merely disobedience, but the logic of analogy upon which that disobedience rested. In Surah Sad, verse 76, the objection of Iblis is recounted as follows:

> "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."

This statement is the essence of history's most dangerous delusion. Rather than complying with God's command, Iblis made his own calculation of superiority. He denigrated earth, exalted fire, and ultimately objected to God's wisdom with his own limited intellect. This was the first spark of materialism and racism in human history.

Looking at the historical reflections of this delusion, the picture is deeply illuminating. The divisions between Black and white, rich and poor, Turk and Kurd, man and woman — all rest upon the same question: "Am I inferior or superior to this person?" When this question is answered not according to God's judgment but according to material and human criteria, one has set foot on the path of Iblis.

The Quran sets a definitive standard against this delusion. Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, declares:

> "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."

This verse explains that humanity's creation into different nations and tribes is not a basis for superiority but an occasion for acquaintance and cooperation. True nobility is to be sought not in the material of one's creation, one's sex, race, or class — but

solely in conscious devotion to God: that is, in taqwa.

The Enmity of Iblis: A Strategy of Gradual Deviation

The enmity of Iblis toward humanity did not begin and end with his jealousy of Adam; it continued as a systematic plan directed at all of Adam's descendants. Jealousy and hatred drove Iblis to the loss of his own consciousness — making him the most powerful example of how far any form of wicked character can drag a being down a dangerous path.

Iblis's strategy is built not on open, direct assault but on gradual estrangement. The phrase in Surah An-Nur, verse 21 — "do not follow the footsteps of satan" — reveals the essence of this strategy. To drift away step by step means that a person begins with minor sins and is swept along toward major deviations. At each step one grows a little more accustomed, a little more blind, and the distance between oneself and God widens without one even noticing.

The most effective tools in this process are ingratitude, analogy, jealousy, and arrogance. Ingratitude impels a person to compare themselves with others; comparison breeds jealousy; jealousy nourishes arrogance; and arrogance ultimately opens the door to transgressing against God. Iblis lived through this very cycle himself, and he swore to open that same door for humanity.

Traditionalist Understanding and the Danger of Drifting from the Quran

The most insidious dimension of Iblis's strategy is the construction of structures that will sever people from the Quran. Throughout history, certain traditionalist interpretations have — whether consciously or unconsciously — prepared fertile ground for this strategy.

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 78, captures this situation strikingly: "And among them are the unlettered who do not know the Scripture except in wishful thinking, and they are only assuming."

To memorize the Quran without understanding it, to pronounce its words while failing to grasp its message, transforms a person into an unarmed soldier. One who does not know the enemy, who is unaware of the enemy's tricks, cannot resist them.

Some of the obstacles produced by traditionalist approaches must be evaluated in this context. The absolute requirement of knowing Arabic in order to understand the Quran has excluded vast numbers of people. The acceptance of hadiths and commentaries — especially the circulation of narrations that contradict the Quran — has muddied the message. An understanding that prioritizes formal compliance over the internalization of rituals carries the danger of turning the Quran from a living guide into a static symbol.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 104, directly criticizes this imitative mentality: "They say, 'Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers.' Even though their fathers knew nothing, nor were they guided?"

The Quran calls upon humanity to think and to question. In Surah Muhammad, verse 24, this call is unmistakably clear: "Do they not reflect upon the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?"

Thinking is the antidote to imitation. Masses that obey without questioning are the easiest targets for deception — for a mind that does not think remains dependent on the guidance of others.

Knowing the Enemy, Protecting Oneself

The Quran's teaching on Iblis and satan can be summarized in several core principles.

First, satan is not a single being but a general attribute and quality that can emerge from both jinn and humans. Second, Iblis is from the jinn, and the Quran establishes this with a clarity that leaves no room for debate; the belief that he was an angel is fed by non-Islamic mythological sources. Third, the analogy of Iblis is the prototype of materialism and racism; true superiority lies in taqwa alone. Fourth, satan's strategy is built on gradual estrangement, and his most effective weapon is severing people from the Quran. Fifth, the only true shield against this severance is to understand the Quran, to reflect upon it, and to apply it to one's life.

The human being is among the most honored of all creation. This honor does not stem from race, sex, language, or class — it springs from conscious devotion to God. Iblis has produced new tools in every age to sever this bond. Today those tools appear sometimes as racism, sometimes as religious formalism, and sometimes as mindless imitation.

The duty of Muslims is to see the face of the enemy in the mirror of the Quran, and to take refuge in God by recognizing the weaknesses within themselves. For the greatest enemy is most often not outside — it is hidden within: in ingratitude, in arrogance, in jealousy, and in the flight from thought.

God knows best.

Jinn, Whispers, and the Modern Human from a Quranic Perspective: An Evaluation on the Axis of Monotheism

The modern world is full of countless elements that threaten the balance of the human soul and body. Technological advancements and changing living conditions have weakened the deep bond humanity once held with both nature and spirituality. As a result of this weakening, psychological disorders and psychosomatic illnesses are steadily increasing. Yet attributing this situation solely to the hardships of modern life means missing the essence of the matter. The spiritual void lying deep within human psychology and the inability to cope with intrusive thoughts constitute the fundamental dynamics of this process. On the other hand, superstition, fear, and exploitation accumulated over centuries around the concepts of jinn, whispers, and metaphysics present a separate problem. Here, in light of Quranic verses, we will examine the creation, nature, and existential mission of jinn; explore the effect of waswasa (whispers) on human psychology; and evaluate the superstitious beliefs widespread in society and the exploitation of religion from the Quran's monotheistic

perspective.

The Creation of Jinn: The Quran's Declaration

The Quran clearly states the material from which jinn were created. In Surah Ar-Rahman, verse 15, it is stated: “And He created the jinn from a surging flame of fire.” The word "marij" used in this verse comes from the Arabic root م-ر-ج (m-r-j), carrying the meanings of something that has become mixed, disordered, and unstable; a sparkling and smoky flame; and a bewilderingly mobile form. The root verb "maraja" means to mix, to interweave, to intermingle. The same root expression is also used in Surah Al-Furqan, verse 53, to describe the mixing of fresh and saltwater, reinforcing the word's connotation of "flowing, fluid, mixed movement." In Surah Al-Hijr, verse 27, jinn are described as having been created "from scorching fire." This expression reveals that the nature of jinn is explained not through ordinary matter, but through a formless and energetic flame. Among the characteristics of jinn are invisibility and the ability to penetrate matter, indicating that they exist in a different dimension of the physical world. The fact that humans were created from earth and jinn from this energetic fire shows that the two groups of beings are fundamentally completely separate from one another. If they belonged to the same group, their material of creation would be expected to be the same.

Iblis, Jinn, and Humans: The Quran's Clear Distinction

It is plainly evident that claims suggesting jinn are simply foreign humans are incompatible with Quranic verses. In Surah Al-Kahf, verse 50, it is stated: "And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblis. He was of the jinn and departed from the command of his Lord." This verse unequivocally establishes that Iblis was not an angel but a jinn. While angels do not act contrary to Allah's commands, jinn, as beings apparently endowed with free will, can rebel. If jinn were nothing more than foreign humans, Iblis would also have to be human; yet his creation and behavior correspond not to humans but to jinn.

In Surah Al-An'am, verse 112, the mention of devils from both humans and jinn proves that these two groups are independent categories of one another. If jinn were already humans, there would be no need for a separate expression such as "human devils" and "jinn devils." In Surah An-Naml, verse 17, Prophet Sulayman's army is cited as three distinct components — jinn, humans, and birds — and this distinction further confirms that the two communities are fundamentally different beings. In Surah Fussilat, verse 29, the disbelievers refer to "both jinn and humans," again meaning two separate groups; and in Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 56, "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me" is stated, addressing both as separate subjects of address.

Waswasa, Iblis, and Psychology: The Physical Reflections of Spiritual Turmoil

In the story of Prophet Ayyub in the Quran, Surah Sad, verse 41, it is mentioned that Iblis cannot directly afflict humans physiologically, but can only lay the groundwork for physical ailments indirectly by corrupting the psychology. This divine teaching aligns profoundly with what modern medicine calls "psychosomatic illnesses." Iblis

exploits the spiritual weaknesses of humans to instill waswasa; the spiritual turbulence created by this whispering can transform into psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, social phobia, and panic attacks. This psychological deterioration then opens the door to physiological diseases over time. It is also acknowledged by modern neuroscience that pressure on the nervous system and brain chemistry disrupts neurotransmitter balance. It is known that a constant state of stress and anxiety weakens the immune system, disrupts sleep patterns, and negatively affects cardiovascular health. The Quran conveyed this truth centuries ago in a spiritual framework, clearly revealing that the restlessness of the human soul also threatens bodily integrity. The statement in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28 — "Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" — is the most concise expression of this holistic understanding. The prescription for healing that Allah revealed to Prophet Ayyub also gives concrete form to this holistic approach: walking stabilizes the nervous system by balancing the body's natural electrical charge; bathing and drinking plenty of water both remove external burdens and maintain the electrical balance of internal organs. Grounding allows the human body to channel excess charge into the earth. Indeed, in Surah Taha, verse 12, Musa was commanded to remove his sandals, enabling him to benefit directly from the earth's calming and purifying effect. Alongside all these physical elements, reliance on Allah, remembrance (dhikr), and adherence to revelation are the most solid guarantees of spiritual balance.

Jinn Do Not Flee from the Quran: The Testimony of Surah Al-Ahqaf and Surah Al-Jinn

One of the most widespread misconceptions in society is the claim that jinn flee when the Quran is recited and can thereby be "expelled." The Quran itself refutes this claim through its own verses. In Surah Al-Ahqaf, verse 29, it is stated: "And when We directed to you a group of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, 'Listen quietly.' And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners." This verse clearly shows that jinn do not flee from the Quran; on the contrary, they were specifically directed to listen to it attentively. Moreover, after listening to the Quran, the jinn returned to their communities to convey its message — proving that they are responsible beings who received guidance from the Quran.

In Surah Al-Jinn, verses 1 and 2, it is stated: "Say: It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn listened and said, 'Indeed, we have heard a wondrous Quran that guides to the right course, and we have believed in it.'" Jinn comprehend the Quran, are moved by it, and are capable of having faith. The Quran is a source of guidance for both humans and jinn; instrumentalizing it as a "jinn-expelling book" distorts its essential function.

There is also another noteworthy point: our Prophet Muhammad was informed through revelation that jinn were listening to the Quran — he did not witness this event directly himself. This reveals that jinn exist in a dimension beyond human perception, casting doubt on the claims of those today who say "I saw jinn" or "I felt jinn." Within the framework drawn by the Quran, these beings are not of a nature that can be directly perceived by human senses.

Metaphysics, Occult Sciences, and the Exploitation of Religion: The Quran's Warning

The concept of "metaphysics" does not appear in the Quran or in the hadith. This title is an artificial designation constructed in the modern era through people's fear of and curiosity about the unknown. Individuals who present themselves as "knowledgeable about invisible realms" are turning religious concepts into a means of profit. Yet the Quran repeatedly and clearly declares that knowledge of the unseen (ghayb) belongs to Allah alone. People claiming to possess definitive knowledge in this domain are in direct contradiction with the Quran. Throughout history, a spurious field known as "occult sciences" (havas ilmi) — built upon magic, talismans, and hidden powers — has also emerged. These books are not based on a Quran-centered understanding but on the influences of different cultures; they claim access to knowledge of the unseen and direct people through fear and expectation. Discourses such as "jinn possession," "energy cleansing," and "breaking spells" have no concrete basis, are not supported by the Quran, serve financial gain, and are moreover superstitious and polytheistic beliefs.

In Surah Al-Jinn, verse 6, it is stated: "And there were men from mankind who sought refuge in men from the jinn, so they only increased them in burden." This verse clearly draws attention to the fact that seeking refuge in jinn deepens the waywardness of humans even further. In Surah As-Saffat, verses 158 and 159, those who fabricate kinship between jinn and Allah are condemned, and it is stated: "Exalted is Allah above what they describe." In Surah Al-An'am, verse 128, the fate of those who cooperate with jinn in the hereafter is clearly declared.

The Quran contains no ritual, method, or special session for expelling jinn. The purpose of the Quran is neither to expel jinn nor to obtain mysterious powers; it is a book of guidance that establishes monotheism for humans and jinn alike and offers moral and spiritual direction.

The Historical Roots of Superstitions and the Role of Psychology

The concept of jinn has been distorted over time from the Quran's clear framework and has been shaped by cultural accumulations. In pre-Islamic Arab belief, jinn were seen as nature spirits living in mountains and desolate places — an understanding that does not correspond with the Quran's definition of creation from fire and accountability. Through the influence of Persian and Indian cultures, jinn were conflated with mythological creatures such as fairies, ifrits, and marids, taking on an altogether more terrifying form. Modern cinema and media continue to reinforce this perception. In the past, as the science of psychology had not yet developed, hallucinations, psychosis, and disorders of consciousness were not understood; these conditions were associated with jinn possession or magic. Mediums and other fraudsters exploited this gap in knowledge, using mentally ill individuals as pretexts to spread the culture of seeking refuge in jinn. Throughout history, some mentally ill people suffered severe treatment due to this misconception. Today, believers in jinn possession rituals still exist; however, all of these contradict the Quran's understanding of monotheism and its principle of accountability. Psychological problems can now be identified and treated through scientific methods. An approach

free of superstition, grounded in medical and psychological support, is the correct one both religiously and humanistically. Attributing problems to jinn possession distances the individual from real treatment and leaves them in the hands of religious charlatans.

The Correct Framework Drawn by the Quran: Monotheism and Responsibility

According to the Quran's declaration, jinn are a separate group of beings held responsible for worship of Allah, endowed with free will, and capable of being either believers or disbelievers. Like humans, they will be held accountable for their deeds. Jinn have no power independent of Allah; they too are servants of Allah. Their only difference from humans is that they are invisible. Grasping this truth both eliminates unnecessary fear of jinn and prevents misguided expectations directed toward them. Fearing jinn or seeking refuge in them damages the belief in monotheism. Deifying jinn or attributing independent power to them is clear deviation.

Within the framework drawn by the Quran, one should keep a distance not so much from jinn as from mediums, faith healers, astrologers, religious charlatans, and those who write amulets. These are individuals who exploit people's fears and ignorance, causing harm both in this world and the next. True protection lies in placing one's trust in Allah, remembering Him, understanding the Quran, and living by it. A person who builds their spiritual world on solid foundations and nourishes themselves both spiritually and psychologically in order to cope with intrusive thoughts has themselves secured the most reliable safeguard.

The Quran is a book that clearly affirms the existence of jinn and unambiguously sets out their nature, responsibilities, and relationship with humans. Jinn are not mysterious evils that flee from the Quran, but responsible beings who listen to it, comprehend it, and are capable of faith. Iblis's greatest effect on humans is to lay the groundwork for physical illness indirectly by corrupting the psychology — a truth that is the shared finding of both revelation and modern psychosomatic medicine. "Metaphysical expertise," "occult sciences," and "jinn expulsion rituals" are artificial concepts with no basis in the Quran whatsoever, exploiting public fear and ignorance. Religion does not teach fear of the unknown; it teaches grasping the truth, trusting in Allah, and surrendering to His guidance. Hearts find rest only through the remembrance of Allah; seeking this peace in false powers or in the promises of religious charlatans weakens both faith and the human being.

Azrael Belief: Revelation or Isrāʾīliyyāt?

The figure of Azrael, known in Islam as the "angel of death," has held a profound place in Muslim communities' consciousness for centuries. This name, frequently mentioned in folk songs and poetry, popular narratives, and even everyday conversation, is accepted as though it were a fundamental element of the Quran. Yet upon a more careful examination of the matter, one is confronted with a strikingly compelling truth: the name "Azrael" appears in neither the Quran nor hadith sources. This situation makes it genuinely necessary to question the origins of this belief and whether it is compatible with Islamic creed.

The Origin of the Name Azrael and Its Historical Background

The word "Azrael" is a name of Hebrew origin belonging to the Semitic language family. An etymological examination reveals that it is based on the Hebrew form "El-azar," carrying the meaning "God's help." The name also means "one who separates" or "one who severs something from something," and this meaning gradually opened the door to its identification with the angel of death. The entry of this name into Islam occurred not through direct revelation, but as a product of contact between Jewish and Christian traditions and Islamic culture. Various narratives concerning the angel of death exist in Jewish tradition. These narratives seeped into Islamic literature during the early period of Islam through relations established with the People of the Book — particularly through the channel of Isrāīliyyāt. Consequently, the name "Azrael" is nourished not from Islam's original source of revelation, but from foreign narrative elements that later blended into Islamic culture.

The Angel of Death in the Quran: Singular or Plural?

The Quran contains many verses related to death, yet none of them mention the name "Azrael." Moreover, the Quran attributes the duty of death not to a single angel, but to a community of angels. Verse 61 of Surah Al-An'am carries a particularly clear expression in this regard:

> "And He is the Irresistible, Supreme over His servants, and He sends guardians over you until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they never fail in their duty." (Al-An'am, 6:61)

Several important points stand out in this verse. First, the expression "Our messengers" is used in the plural — meaning the act of taking souls is not the monopoly of a single angel. Second, it is emphasized that this duty at the moment of death is carried out flawlessly, yet no special name is given to the angel performing it. Verse 27 of Surah Muhammad draws a similar framework:

> "How will it be when the angels take them at death, striking their faces and backs?" (Muhammad, 47:27)

Here too, the verbs and subjective references are used in the plural. The act of taking souls is depicted as the joint activity of more than one angel. Verse 32 of Surah An-Nahl, while describing the moment of death for the righteous, likewise uses a plural expression:

> "Those whom the angels take in death while they are pure — they say, 'Peace be upon you! Enter Paradise for what you used to do.'" (An-Nahl, 16:32)

This verse, while offering a depiction of the moment of death not in a purely fearful manner but as a peaceful and glad reception for believers, again refers to a community of angels. The Quran's consistent use of plural language does not support the concept of a single, individual "angel of death."

The Expression "Malak al-Mawt": A Single Name or a Title?

At this point, the following objection may arise: Verse 11 of Surah As-Sajdah states:

> "Say: The angel of death, who has been entrusted with you, will take your souls, and then you will be returned to your Lord." (As-Sajdah, 32:11)

In this verse, "malak al-mawt" (angel of death) is used in the singular. However, it is not possible to claim that this expression refers to a specific angel named "Azrael," because the Quran has not given this angel any special name. "Malak al-mawt" is a title or a job description — just as the word "messenger" defines a role rather than a specific person. Furthermore, this expression should not be thought to contradict the plural expressions used in other verses.

The Narrative of Prophet Moses and the Angel of Death: A Critical Reading

According to a widely transmitted narration in Islam, reported to appear in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih al-Muslim, the angel of death came to take the soul of Prophet Moses, whereupon Moses struck the angel and gouged out his eye. It is narrated that God restored the angel's eye, and Moses then requested the right to determine his own time of death. What is also noteworthy in this narration is the absence of the name "Azrael." Just as the name is not found in the Quran, it does not appear in this narration transmitted in the sources either. On the other hand, the content of this narration stands in serious tension with the Quran's general message. The Quran depicts prophets as being in complete submission to the will of God. A prophet who knows that everything, including death, occurs by God's decree applying physical violence to an angel appointed by God is incompatible with this theological framework. It is worth noting that Moses' character in the Quran — portrayed as both passionate and deeply devoted in faith — is well-established; however, striking God's angel is a matter that points to a different dimension altogether. This narration was infiltrated into Islam by enemies of the religion.

The Issue of Isrāʾīliyyāt: The Entry of Foreign Narratives into Islam

Isrāʾīliyyāt is a term used in Islamic exegetical literature to describe narrations of Jewish and Christian origin. In the early period of Islam, individuals who converted from the People of the Book transmitted narratives from their own religious cultures, and these narratives at times became mixed into exegetical and hadith literature. The name "Azrael," with all its characteristics, falls squarely into this Isrāʾīliyyāt category. Detailed narratives concerning the angel of death exist in Jewish apocryphal literature — particularly in the Talmud and various midrashim. The passage of these narratives into Islamic culture laid the groundwork for Azrael's adoption as the angel of death. Indeed, the increasingly frequent mention of Azrael in popular Islamic works written after the early major compilers of exegesis and hadith lays bare the historical process of this transition.

The Silence of Revelation: A Theological Assessment

The Quran is extremely clear and detailed on matters of creed. On subjects such as the names and attributes of God, the general duties of angels, and the stages of the afterlife, revelation has conveyed all necessary information. If the existence of an

angel named "Azrael" were necessary and decisive for belief, one would expect the Quran to have explicitly mentioned this name. Yet no special name has been given in the Quran to any angel associated with the duty of death. This silence should be regarded not as coincidental, but as a meaningful and deliberate choice.

Testing Belief Against Revelation

Although the belief in Azrael has left deep traces in the cultural memory of Muslim societies, grounding this belief on firm foundations from the perspective of the Quran and hadith is difficult. The conclusions reached may be summarized under the following headings:

First, the name "Azrael" appears in neither the Quran nor in the hadiths concerning the angel of death. The name was carried into Islamic culture from Jewish and Christian traditions.

Second, the Quran conveys the duty of death most often through plural expressions. The act of taking souls is attributed to a community of angels — a fact that calls into question a single, dominant portrayal of "Azrael."

Third, the expression "malak al-mawt" is a title, not a proper name, and identifying it directly with "Azrael" goes beyond what can be derived from the text.

Fourth, the narration about Prophet Moses striking the angel of death strains the Quran's portrayal of prophets in terms of its content, and may be assessed as bearing the influence of Isrāʾīliyyāt.

Fifth, the foundational principle of Islamic creed is to ground matters of belief in revelation. To call an angel by a name that revelation has not explicitly given, and to attribute specific qualities to it, amounts to accepting elements that were subsequently added to the religion's original structure.

This assessment does not invite Muslims to abandon their general belief in angels as affirmed by God; on the contrary, it invites them to pass their claims of belief through the filter of the Quran. What revelation clearly states is the truth that angels carry out their duty at the moment of death. However, this truth does not necessitate names that go beyond revelation and are the product of cultural and religious transmission. The fundamental epistemological principle of Islam remains constant: the Quran is sufficient. This principle continues to serve as a guide in the matter of Azrael as well.

Mi'raj: A Critical Evaluation in the Light of the Quran

The event known in Islamic tradition as "Mi'raj" is narrated as the Prophet Muhammad ascending to the heavens, personally meeting with God, touring paradise and hell, meeting other prophets, and the times of prayer being determined during this journey. However, when these narratives are examined in light of Quranic verses, historical facts, and principles of reason, they are seen to contain serious inconsistencies and contradictions. Here we will question the Mi'raj narrations from a Quran-centered perspective, with historical data and logical principles.

Isra and Mi'raj: Two Separate Concepts

First, a fundamental distinction must be clarified: Isra and Mi'raj are different concepts, and the conflation of these two concepts forms the starting point of the confusion in the narrations. The word Isra means "night journey, to walk swiftly at night." The first verse of the Quran's Surah Al-Isra clearly contains this concept:

"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

The concept and name of Mi'raj does not appear anywhere in the Quran. This fact alone is noteworthy. Moreover, Mi'raj is not narrated in Ibn Ishaq, the oldest biographical source. Early biographical books speak only of the Isra. Some biographical scholars, while narrating the Isra, make no mention of Jerusalem; instead they focus directly on the Prophet Muhammad's ascent from Mecca to God's presence. This deep inconsistency in hadith and biographical literature indicates that the Mi'raj narrative was fabricated at a later time.

Fundamental Contradictions Within the Narrations

The Mi'raj narrations contain mutually contradictory data even within themselves:

Chronological uncertainty: The narrations state that Mi'raj occurred between the fifth and twelfth years of prophethood — a span of seven full years. There are even narrations claiming that the Prophet Muhammad experienced this event before becoming a prophet. How many times it occurred is unclear: There is also no consensus among narrations regarding how many times Mi'raj took place. Was it physical or spiritual? Whether the Prophet Muhammad made this journey with his body, his soul, in a dream, or while awake is also disputed. Some hadith authorities acknowledge that an event experienced in a dream was over time narrated as if it were real. The inability to produce a consistent narrative even on such fundamental questions clearly demonstrates that the Mi'raj narrations lack a solid foundation.

The Influence of Foreign Cultures: The Zoroastrian Example

One of the most striking dimensions of the Mi'raj narrative is its structural similarity to other religious traditions. Zoroaster was a religious figure who lived in Iran approximately 600 years before the Prophet Muhammad. The following account is found in the Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrians: Angels received Zoroaster, split open his chest and cleansed his interior, after which Zoroaster appeared before Ahura Mazda and learned the commandments of the "Good Religion," saw paradise and hell, was informed about the movements of stars and planets, and ultimately returned with a holy book.

The structural similarity between this account and the Mi'raj narrations is striking: ascent to the heavens, reception by angels, splitting and cleansing of the chest, transmission of divine knowledge, and return. It is known that as Islam spread rapidly after the Hijra, Arab society came into intensive contact with Iranian, Greek, and Indian cultures. In this environment of cultural interaction, some elements were

carried into Islam, as is clearly visible in the Mi'raj narrative. It appears that ignorant or ill-intentioned individuals introduced such narratives into the Islamic tradition in order to present the Prophet Muhammad as superior to the leading figures of other religions. Yet this effort produced a fabrication with no basis anywhere in the Quran.

The Matter of Masjid al-Aqsa and Historical Facts

According to narrations, the Prophet Muhammad traveled from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa on the night of the Isra. However, this account clearly contradicts historical facts. The literal meaning of the phrase "Masjid al-Aqsa" is "the distant mosque" — this is not a name specific to a particular structure in Jerusalem, but an ordinary adjective. The building known today as Al-Aqsa Mosque is a basilica built by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (482–565) over the ruins of the ancient Temple of Solomon. Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (646–705) gave this structure the name "Masjid al-Aqsa" as part of a political move against the Abbasids. The Dome of the Rock was constructed between 687 and 691 CE. These dates are long after the period in which Mi'raj is claimed to have occurred. Therefore, during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, there was no structure in Jerusalem known as "Masjid al-Aqsa." Furthermore, Jerusalem was under Christian control at that time. The existence of an Islamic mosque there is historically impossible. The narrations recount that the Prophet Muhammad described the mosque in Jerusalem to the polytheists, yet not a single detail of this description is provided. The complete absence of any concrete information about how a non-existent structure was described is a clear indication that the narration in question was fabricated after the fact.

Surah An-Najm and the Chronological Contradiction

The concepts of "Sidrat al-Muntaha" and "Qab Qawsayn," frequently referenced in the Mi'raj narrative, appear in Surah An-Najm. According to traditional hadith sources, Surah An-Najm was revealed at least eight years before Surah Al-Isra. This chronological fact raises a fundamental question: How can a surah narrate an event that has not yet occurred? If Surah An-Najm was revealed eight years before Mi'raj, its content cannot be referring to Mi'raj. Moreover, traditionalists simultaneously claim both that "verses have reasons for their revelation" and that "the verse was revealed before the event had occurred." These two claims are in direct contradiction with each other.

When verses 4–17 of Surah An-Najm are read carefully, it becomes apparent that the narrative conveys an experience in which the Prophet Muhammad witnessed a spirit. The "lote tree" mentioned in the verse is a real species of tree known in the Middle East as Ziziphus spina-christi, a thorny tree native to hot climates, which was used in that era as a landmark in rural areas. The word "paradise" in the phrase "Jannat al-Ma'wa" is used in the Quran in dozens of places to refer to worldly gardens as well. "Qab Qawsayn" is a concrete unit of measurement used in that period. All of this evidence indicates that the narrative in Surah An-Najm relates to a moment of revelation experienced by the Prophet Muhammad, not to Mi'raj. Indeed, God's calling out to Moses from behind a tree (Surah Al-Qasas, verse 30) also points to a similar

form of revelation.

The Narration of Fifty Daily Prayers

The narration in Mi'raj hadiths about prayer being reduced from fifty times to five times a day can be refuted by a simple mathematical calculation. There are 1,440 minutes in a day. If fifty prayers were obligatory, the interval between each prayer would be approximately 28 minutes. When the time for ablution is factored in, roughly 10 hours of the day would need to be devoted solely to prayer. When would one sleep, work, or fulfill social duties?

On this matter the Quran is clear: "God intends ease for you, not hardship." (Al-Baqarah 185)

Another problem within this narration is theologically even more serious: in this account, God is portrayed as making mistakes in determining religious rulings, while the one who knows the truth and gives wise counsel is another prophet — Moses. For anyone who believes that God possesses infinite knowledge, this picture is unacceptable. God admits no partner in His judgment, does not err in His commands, and does not "negotiate" with His messengers.

The Claim of Seeing God

In traditionalist interpretations, the pinnacle of Mi'raj is presented as the Prophet Muhammad personally seeing God. This claim is one that the Quran directly rejects:

"Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives all vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted." (Al-An'am 103)

"And it is not for any human being that God should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills." (Ash-Shura 51)

When the Prophet Moses wished to see God, this request was not granted; God manifested upon the mountain, and the mountain was shattered to pieces. The human being is a shadow existence; he cannot directly perceive God, who is absolute existence. Despite this, traditionalist authorities have interpreted the verses in Surah An-Najm as the moment the Prophet Muhammad saw God. This interpretation contradicts the clear statement of the Quran. The words of Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani and Imam Rabbani on this matter fall outside the tenets of Quranic belief. In particular, Imam Rabbani's claim of "stepping outside the confines of time and space" carries a serious problem: the only being capable of existing beyond time and space is God. To claim that a human being can step outside of time and space is to elevate that person to the rank of a deity. This is clear shirk (mushrik).

The Narration of the Washing of the Heart

The hadiths narrate that the Prophet Muhammad's heart was removed by angels, washed with Zamzam water, and then placed back. This narration has no compatibility with the Quran. In the Quran, the concept of "heart" refers not to a

physical organ, but to the human being's spiritual world, soul, thoughts, and ideas. Spiritual purification occurs not through the physical washing of an organ, but through faith in God, living by the Quran's commandments, and moral transformation. Moreover, this narration also contradicts another Quranic verse: "And thus We have revealed to you a spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor what faith was." (Ash-Shura 52) The Prophet Muhammad was not among the believers before becoming a prophet. How then can the same person whose heart was washed and filled with faith before prophethood be identical to this description?

Meeting with Deceased Prophets and Leading Them in Prayer

The Mi'raj narrations recount that the Prophet Muhammad encountered other prophets in the heavens and led them in prayer. This account is also incompatible with the general framework of the Quran. When a person dies, they sever their connection with worldly life. They are called to account and pass on to the place where they will live eternally. In the Quran, there is no defined separate dimension called "life in the grave." Therefore, the idea that deceased prophets await in the heavens, in a space between two worlds, has no basis in the Quran. Furthermore, religious obligations are valid only for this worldly life. After death, the obligation of acts of worship such as prayer ceases. The narration of deceased prophets performing prayers in the heavens is in direct contradiction with this fundamental principle of the Quran.

The Source of the Narrations: The Problem of Abu Hurairah

The majority of Mi'raj hadiths are attributed to Abu Hurairah. This is in itself a significant problem. Abu Hurairah — whose reliability was questioned, whose narration of hadiths was banned, and who was criticized by all four of the Rightly Guided Caliphs — was not yet a Muslim during the period in which the Mi'raj event is claimed to have occurred. According to the narration, he converted to Islam years after this event. Why, then, did the senior companions who were actually present at the time not narrate this event? There is no satisfying answer to this question. The fact that someone who did not personally experience the event narrated far more, and in far greater detail, than the leading companions raises serious doubts about the reliability of the narrations.

The Clear Testimony of the Quran

Verse 93 of Surah Al-Isra illuminates this entire discussion:

"Or you have a house of gold or you ascend into the sky. And even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read. Say: Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a human messenger?"

The polytheists demanded that the Prophet Muhammad ascend to the sky. The Prophet Muhammad's answer is definitive: "I am only a human messenger." If the Prophet Muhammad had truly ascended to the heavens, he would not have given this answer. For such a miracle was precisely what the disbelievers had demanded, and had it occurred, he would have stated it plainly. In the same surah, verse 35 of Surah

Al-An'am states: "And if their evasion is difficult for you, then if you are able to seek a tunnel into the earth or a stairway into the sky to bring them a sign — but if God had willed, He would have gathered them upon guidance." This verse clearly demonstrates that ascending to the sky was something the Prophet Muhammad did not do and could not do.

The Mi'raj narrations are in contradiction with Quranic verses, historical facts, their own internal consistency, and principles of reason. The influence of foreign cultures — particularly the Zoroastrian tradition — has played a determining role at the root of these narrations. Because traditionalists do not fully believe in the sufficiency of the Quran, they have accepted hadith narrations as the decisive source; rather than questioning these narrations in the light of the Quran, they have interpreted Quranic verses through the narrations. This has inevitably led to the overlooking of the wisdom the Quran points to.

The event narrated in Surah Al-Isra, verse 1 is the Prophet Muhammad traveling by night to a familiar place in order to receive revelation, and there seeing the spirit — that is, receiving the revelation. This is an experience the Quran also conveys for other messengers; the night journeys of Lot and Moses are examples of this. In no verse of the Quran is there a single statement indicating that the Prophet Muhammad saw God, ascended to the heavens, or spoke with Him directly. The Quran is sufficient. What we will be questioned about in the Hereafter are the commandments of the Quran. For this reason, placing the Quran at the center of understanding religion and evaluating narrations in the light of the Quran is the only reliable path to reaching the truth.

"Is it not sufficient for them that We revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Indeed in that is a mercy and reminder for a people who believe." (Al-'Ankabut 51)

The Punishment of Stoning: An Evaluation in Light of the Quran, Hadiths, and the Fundamental Principles of Islam

Islam is defined as a universal religion built on justice, compassion, and the protection of human dignity. The Quran, the foundational source of this religion, serves as a divine guide for Muslims and constitutes the ultimate basis for all rulings. However, throughout history, certain punishments have been associated not with the Quran's explicit provisions but with hadith literature, giving rise to profound debates. The most striking example of these debates is the practice of "stoning" (rajm), which prescribes death by stoning for married individuals who commit adultery. Here we will offer a systematic analysis of stoning within the framework of its place in the Quran, the consistency of narrations in hadith sources, the claims that conflict with the principle of the Quran's preservation, and Islam's understanding of justice. The aim is not to carry the debate onto an emotional plane, but to conduct a Quran-centered, principled, and consistent reading.

The Quran's Clear Ruling on the Punishment for Adultery

The Quran defines the punishment for adultery in exceptionally clear terms:

"The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication — flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment." (An-Nur, 24:2)

This verse is entirely unambiguous, both legally and grammatically. The expression "one hundred stripes" is given as an absolute ruling, with no exceptions, conditions, or alternative punishment stipulated. Despite this clear Quranic statement, certain hadith narrations prescribe stoning rather than flogging for married individuals who commit adultery. At first glance, this appears not merely a contradiction but an outright conflict.

Another verse regulates the dimension of accusation:

"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses — lash them with eighty stripes and do not accept their testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient." (An-Nur, 24:4)

This second verse makes it obligatory for an accusation of adultery to be supported by four independent witnesses, imposing a severe sanction on those who fail to meet this standard. The requirement of four witnesses is a threshold that has historically reduced conviction rates to nearly zero — an effectively deterrent bar. This ruling shows that the Quran is focused less on punishing the offense and more on preventing social slander and moral lynching culture.

The Principle of the Quran's Preservation and the Issue of Stoning

One of the most fundamental articles of faith in Islam is that the Quran is protected under divine guarantee. Allah Himself declared this guarantee with the following words:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Al-Hijr, 15:9)

This verse indicates that not a single letter of the Quran can be removed, added, altered, or corrupted. In light of this foundational premise, it becomes strikingly clear how problematic certain claims advanced in the hadiths truly are.

The logical consequences of the claim that the stoning verse fell out of the Quran can be summarized as follows: If a stoning verse was truly revealed by Allah and was subsequently removed from the Quran, one of two options must be true. Either Allah was unable to protect His own revelation — which is plainly contrary to His absolute power — or Allah deliberately and intentionally removed this verse from the Quran, in which case the claim that "its recitation was abrogated but its application continues" constitutes a profound internal contradiction. Neither scenario is compatible with faith.

Analysis of the Narrations in the Hadiths

The Narration Attributed to Caliph Umar

In hadith sources considered reliable, such as Bukhari and Muslim, the following narration is attributed to Caliph Umar:

"Umar said: Were it not that people would say that Umar has added to the Quran, I would have written the stoning verse into it." (Bukhari 93/21; Muslim, Hudud 8/143)

The problems contained in this narration must be addressed on several distinct levels.

First problem — from the perspective of faith: It is incompatible with faith for a Muslim to refrain from adding one of Allah's verses to the Quran out of fear of public criticism. It is worth recalling that the Quran itself warns:

"Who is more unjust than one who denies the signs of Allah and turns away from them?" (Al-An'am, 6:157)

Second problem — from the perspective of the injustice done to Caliph Umar: This narration portrays Umar as someone who concealed a verse of Allah. Yet Islamic history describes Umar as an exceptionally courageous, principled, and forthright character. To depict a companion of such caliber as one who hid divine revelation out of fear of public gossip contradicts both the historical record and his identity as a companion. This narration therefore constitutes a slander against both the Quran and Caliph Umar.

Third problem — from the perspective of the Quran's integrity: If such a verse truly existed and Umar knew of it, hundreds of companions would also have had to know it. The Quran was preserved systematically both in written and oral form during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. A scenario of a "lost verse" known exclusively to one individual and leaving no trace in collective memory is historically implausible.

The Goat Narration

In hadith literature — in sources such as Ibn Majah and Ahmad ibn Hanbal — there exists another remarkably striking narration. According to this account, a page kept in Aisha's house that contained verses on stoning and breastfeeding was eaten by a goat, and thus erased from the Quran. (Ibn Majah 36/194; Hanbal 3/61, 5/131)

This narration is perhaps the most problematic of all, in that it directly contradicts the principle of the Quran's preservation. Consider: The claim that Allah's divine revelation was destroyed by an animal is fundamentally incompatible with religious belief. If Allah could not protect His revelation from a goat's stomach, what is the meaning of the guarantee given in Al-Hijr 15:9? Furthermore, this scenario compels one to ask: Had the memorizers not committed these verses to memory? Were written copies of the Quran not in the possession of other companions? To claim that the destruction of a single copy could eliminate revelation implies that the Quran's mechanism of preservation was exceedingly fragile — a position that is irreconcilable with faith.

The Claim That the Ruling of the Stoning Verse Continues

Some narrations assert that although the recitation of the stoning verse was removed from the Quran, its ruling remains valid. (Muslim, Hudud 15)

This claim is based on the theory of abrogation (naskh). Naskh refers to one Quranic ruling being invalidated by another. However, the form of abrogation used here is far more unusual: the wording of the verse was supposedly removed, yet its ruling supposedly continues. This is a theologically highly problematic argument. For the Quran must contain everything whose ruling remains in force; otherwise, its claim to be a "complete guide" collapses. Indeed, Allah has declared:

"And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims." (An-Nahl, 16:89)

It is a serious contradiction for a book that is "clarification for all things" to omit a punishment that is supposedly mandatory to implement.

The Prophet Muhammad's Responsibility of Conveying the Message

Allah placed upon the Prophet Muhammad an absolute responsibility to convey the revelation in full:

"O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people." (Al-Ma'idah, 5:67)

This verse is an extremely powerful divine directive. For the Prophet Muhammad to have concealed or failed to convey any revelation he received from Allah directly contradicts this verse. If the stoning verse was truly revealed and was not conveyed, this would place the Prophet Muhammad in the position of someone who fulfilled his prophetic duty incompletely — a conclusion that is unacceptable both religiously and historically. Moreover, the Quran explicitly states that the Prophet Muhammad did not speak from his own desire, emphasizing that he acted solely on the basis of revelation. Therefore, if the stoning punishment is not rooted in revelation, it can be questioned on Quranic grounds as well.

The Standard of Evidence and the Principle of Justice

The requirement of four witnesses stipulated in the Quran (An-Nur, 24:4) sets an extraordinarily high threshold for proving the crime of adultery. For four individuals to bear direct personal witness to the same act as independent witnesses meeting specific conditions is a practically near-impossible standard. This threshold conveys a vitally important message: the Quran does not encourage the state to investigate moral conduct in the private sphere. On the contrary, the fact that the accuser faces punishment if the accusation cannot be proven serves as a powerful deterrent against cultures of social surveillance and denunciation. In this context, the following question becomes unavoidable: In which of the historical cases where stoning was applied was the requirement of four witnesses truly satisfied? If stoning was applied without meeting this requirement, it means that the fundamental principles of Islamic law were violated. If it was satisfied, how that could be possible is itself a separate matter for debate.

Islam's Principles of Justice and Mercy

Islam is defined not solely by penal law, but equally by reform, compassion, and the protection of human dignity. The Quran contains numerous verses that foreground reform over punishment:

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression." (An-Nahl, 16:90)

How can death by stoning be reconciled with this understanding of justice? Stoning is an irreversible punishment. When an error is made, it cannot be remedied. The punishment of one hundred stripes prescribed by the Quran is, by contrast, both deterrent and reversible. Moreover, Islam's principle of mercy cannot be overlooked. Allah is invoked by the attributes "Rahman" (the Most Gracious) and "Rahim" (the Most Merciful) in almost every surah of the Quran. This understanding, which keeps the door of repentance perpetually open, is incompatible with an absolute and brutal punishment such as death by stoning. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes that sinners must be given the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness:

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins.'" (Az-Zumar, 39:53)

This universal call to forgiveness is entirely contrary to the spirit of the stoning punishment.

A Consistent Legal Understanding Centered on the Quran

Throughout the history of Islamic law, the debate over the hierarchy between the Quran and the hadiths has never been closed. However, in this debate, the following fundamental principle must be determinative: the Quran must be accepted both as the highest among all sources and as the touchstone against which other sources are tested — not the hadiths. All hadiths have passed through human transmission processes and have been exposed to risks such as memory errors, political conjuncture, breaks in chains of transmission, and decontextualization. The Quran, by contrast, is accepted as having been preserved under divine guarantee, independent of such processes. Accordingly, elevating a hadith that clearly contradicts the Quran above the Quran itself is incompatible with the fundamental epistemology of Islam.

Fidelity to the Quran, Fidelity to Justice

The stoning punishment is not present in the Quran. This, in itself, is a decisive argument. For the Quran is, for Muslims, the preserved, complete, and universal guide of Allah. If the Quran prescribes no such punishment, and if this punishment rests solely on hadith narrations that are internally inconsistent, then complying with the Quran's explicit ruling rather than deferring to those narrations is a religious and moral imperative.

Those who defend the stoning punishment cannot escape the following questions: If Allah cannot protect His revelation from a goat, what is the meaning of the Quran's

guarantee? If Caliph Umar concealed a verse of Allah out of fear of public opinion, how is that compatible with faith? How can a punishment absent from the Quran be appended alongside the explicit ruling of An-Nur 2:2, which clearly prescribes one hundred stripes?

The practice of stoning is not merely a subject of legal debate; it is also a profound theological and moral problem. To apply this punishment in the name of Islam, despite its absence from the Quran, is a serious violation of both the integrity of the Quran and Islam's understanding of justice — a violation that extends to the dimension of a crime against human life.

The essence of Islam lies in fidelity to Allah's preserved Book. When that fidelity is placed before the pressure of habit, tradition, or authority, the answer to the matter of stoning emerges of its own accord: This punishment is not in Allah's Book; therefore, it has no place in Allah's religion.

"He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden, and He is the Knower of all things." (Al-Hadid, 57:3)

Our Prophet Jesus: A Quran-Centered Examination of the Crucifixion, Death, and Date of Birth

Islam has long debated the matter of Prophet Jesus, a topic that has for centuries remained largely dependent on narrations, sectarian assumptions, and oral traditions. Yet much of this debate rests on hadith literature and traditional interpretive frameworks rather than Quranic verses. The Quran itself, however, contains remarkably striking statements regarding the fate of Prophet Jesus, the question of the crucifixion, and his date of birth. Here we will address the subject by taking only the Quranic verses as our foundation, while also evaluating relevant statements from the Torah and Gospel alongside historical and geographical data from a supporting perspective. We will also reconsider the concepts of death, perception, and reality within the context of the spirit-matter relationship, and examine traditional assumptions about Prophet Jesus's date of birth within this framework.

The Matter of Tawaffī — "I Will Take You Completely"

Āl ʿImrān 3:55

One of the most fundamental verses addressing the fate of Prophet Jesus is the 55th verse of Āl ʿImrān:

> "O Jesus! Indeed, I will take you completely (mutawaffīka), raise you to Myself, purify you from those who disbelieve, and place those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then your return is to Me, and I will judge between you in that over which you used to differ."

The word mutawaffīka appearing in this verse is a derivative of the verb tawaffā, which is used consistently throughout the Quran with the meaning of taking the soul and putting an end to life. This meaning of the word is entirely clear in other verses:

- In Al-Anʿām 6:61, the expression "until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him" is again constructed from the root tawaffā.

- In Muḥammad 47:27, the expression "when the angels take them at death, striking their faces and their backs" also derives from the same root.

In the language of the Quran, tawaffā does not carry the meaning of "being taken bodily to heaven without dying" in any verse. In that case, interpreting Āl ʿImrān 3:55 as "taking up to heaven without dying" contradicts the intra-Quranic usage of the word.

Al-Māʾida 5:117

In this verse, conveyed in the very words of Prophet Jesus himself, it is stated:

> "I said to them only what You commanded me... When You took me completely (tawaffaytanī), You were the Observer over them."

This statement is of great importance, for Prophet Jesus explains that his witness over his community came to an end after Allah "took him completely." If Prophet Jesus were still alive and were to return to earth, this witnessing would either never have ended, or would need to resume upon his return. The verse, however, presents this act of "complete taking" in the past tense, as a completed event.

Al-Nisāʾ 4:157 — Understanding the Expression Shubbiha Lahum Correctly

This verse, addressing the Jewish claim regarding the death of Prophet Jesus, constitutes one of the most debated passages:

> "And for their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah' — and they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but it was made to appear so to them (shubbiha lahum). And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And certainly they did not kill him."

Traditional interpretation presents this verse as definitive proof that Prophet Jesus was neither crucified nor killed. However, this interpretation raises several important questions.

First: To whom does the expression "it appeared so to them" refer? Here "them" (lahum) refers to the Jews — pointing to their perception, to the interpretation they made for themselves.

Second: The rejected proposition in the verse is the confidence and certainty in the expression "we killed him." The Jews were claiming the death of Prophet Jesus as their own achievement, as a product of their own will. The Quran rejects this appropriation, for the true agent is Allah's will.

Third: The expression shubbiha lahum means "the event appeared to them as though it were a victory, yet the reality was different." When examined within the framework of the spirit-body distinction, this interpretation yields a coherent meaning.

Indeed, a person dying on the cross symbolized, from the Jewish perspective, complete defeat and a curse. Deuteronomy 21:23 states: "anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse." The Jews believed that by killing Prophet Jesus in this manner, they had refuted his prophethood. This is precisely the perception the Quran rejects: it was made to appear to them as though they were the victors. In reality, a person observing from outside cannot discern the manner in which someone's death occurs.

The Reality of the Spirit and the Nature of Death

The Status of the Spirit in the Quran

The Quran makes clear that the essential existence of the human being is the spirit. In Al-Isrāʾ 17:85, with the statement "The spirit is of the affair of my Lord, and you have been given of knowledge only a little," the divine mystery of the spirit is emphasized. This verse states that humanity has been given very little knowledge regarding the nature of the spirit.

In Al-Zumar 39:42, it is reported that Allah takes souls both at the moment of death and during sleep.

Al-Nāziʿāt 79:2 — Those Who Draw Forth Gently

At the beginning of this surah are expressions concerning the gentle taking of a believer's soul. The difference between the outward appearance of death and the spirit's true journey becomes clear here as well. For a believer, death — though it may appear painful and tragic from the outside — is in reality a passing in peace. This distinction is also of decisive importance in the matter of Prophet Jesus. What was shown to people on the cross was the outward form. For this reason, the Quran uses both "I will take you completely" and "I will raise you to Myself" in immediate succession.

Matter, Perception, and Reality

In the history of philosophy, thinkers such as Bertrand Russell and Henri Bergson argued that matter is not an absolute reality but is shaped in relation to perception, mind, and states of consciousness. The findings of quantum physics also demonstrate that the observer is not passive — that observed reality is partly shaped by the observer. Within this framework, the tension between Prophet Jesus's appearance on the cross and his ascent to Allah is resolved in the spirit-matter duality. On the outward plane, what people witnessed was a death; on the true plane, he was being exalted by Allah's will. The Quran's expression shubbiha lahum reports the tension between these two planes.

The Testimony of the Torah and the Gospel

The Quran's Quality of "Confirmation"

The Quran sets out its position regarding previous scriptures in numerous verses. In Al-Māʾida 5:46, the Gospel is described as "confirming what came before it of the

Torah." In Āl ʿImrān 3:3, it is stated that Allah revealed the Torah and the Gospel. These expressions acknowledge that the previous scriptures are not entirely fabricated — that there is a truth at their core. Regarding the nature of distortion, the traditional view holds that the previous scriptures have been largely corrupted. However, this view weakens the Quran's emphasis on confirmation. A more reasonable approach is this: distortion occurred in the concentration of meaning, in the misrepresentation of context, in mistranslations, and in interpretive additions — yet the historical core of these scriptures has not entirely lost its deposit of truth.

The Ascension in the Gospel

In Luke 24, the story is told of Prophet Jesus appearing after his death and burial, and ultimately being raised to heaven (Luke 24:50–53). This account corresponds in meaning to the Quran's expression "I will raise you to Myself." The difference lies in the details of how this ascension took place; yet the fundamental fact — that in both the Quran and the Gospel, Prophet Jesus was ultimately raised to Allah — is common to both.

Hadith Narrations and the Problem of Historical Inconsistency

The Problem of the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus

The strongest argument in favor of Prophet Jesus's return before the Day of Judgment rests on narrations in the hadith literature. A narration transmitted in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Abū Dāwūd reports that Prophet Jesus will descend upon the white minaret of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. However, a serious historical problem arises at this point: the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus was constructed between 705–715 CE during the reign of the Umayyad caliph Al-Walīd I. Prophet Muhammad passed away in 632 CE. That is to say, a structure built approximately 75–85 years after the death of Prophet Muhammad is cited in the hadith as though it were a well-known and recognized landmark. This situation raises several serious questions.

First: How could Prophet Muhammad have spoken of a mosque that did not yet exist? If this is a miraculous report based on divine knowledge, this location would need to have been comprehensible to his audience at the time.

Second: Why did the narrators who transmitted this hadith not notice this historical inconsistency? The hadith-critical methodology of Imām Muslim and Abū Dāwūd was conducted primarily from the perspective of the isnād (chain of transmission) rather than the matn (textual criticism). Therefore, the neglect of historical and geographical context may be evaluated as a deficiency of this methodology.

Third: Imām Muslim and Abū Dāwūd were hadith scholars; they did not receive revelation. Their classifying a hadith as "authentic" (ṣaḥīḥ) does not guarantee the absolute truth of its content. This is a methodological judgment, not a religious certainty. Indeed, nowhere in the Quran are the views of Imām Muslim or Abū Dāwūd declared binding.

Can One Person's Interpretation Constitute a Legal Ruling in Religion?

This question constitutes one of the fundamental debates of Islamic jurisprudence and the principles of fiqh. The Quran clearly states the sources in which belief is required: Allah, His Book, and the Messenger. The interpretation of a scholar or hadith expert, however reliable, cannot be accepted as an independent source of ruling in religion. In cases where any narration contradicts the clear statements of the Quran, it is obligatory to take the Quran as the basis.

Said Nursī, the Shakhṣ-i Maʿnavī, and Misinterpretations

Letter 120 of the Kastamonu Addendum

The following passage from Letter 120 of the Kastamonu Addendum by our teacher Said Nursī is one that deserves careful reading:

> "In the past, I used to think that the collective spiritual personality (shakhṣ-i maʿnavī) of the Risale-i Nur was one of those imams. Now I understand that since Ghawth al-Aʿẓam possessed, alongside his axis-hood and succor-hood, the rank of 'Individuality' (Fardiyya) as well, the Risale-i Nur, to which his students are bound in the latter times, is the manifestation of that station of Individuality."

What is noteworthy in this statement is that Said Nursī explicitly says he "used to think" this in the past. What our teacher Said Nursī truly meant is this: someone who reads the Risale-i Nur and is influenced by it would represent the collective spiritual personality of Prophet Jesus. However, the way the Nur Community has interpreted this statement has deviated considerably from what our teacher Said Nursī intended. The expression "the white-turbaned figure" has similarly undergone a deviation in interpretation. The spiritual identity our teacher Said Nursī pointed to has been confined to the institutional structure of a particular community, and thus the concept of shakhṣ-i maʿnavī has been transformed into an individual collective identity. The fact that our teacher Said Nursī said that Prophet Jesus would come not in person but as a shakhṣ-i maʿnavī is actually an extremely important distinction. However, since our teacher Said Nursī was not a prophet or someone who received revelation, it cannot be claimed with certainty that someone influenced by the Risale-i Nur will proclaim Islam. It can only be considered that he held such an idea.

The Date of Birth of Prophet Jesus

The Geographical and Climatic Data of the Gospel of Luke

Two critical pieces of information appear in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. First, on the night of the birth, shepherds were pasturing their flocks in the fields (Luke 2:8). Second, Emperor Augustus had issued a census decree requiring all the people to return to their hometowns to register (Luke 2:1–3).

When the climatic conditions of Palestine are assessed, the following data stand out: in the winter months (December–January), nighttime temperatures in Jerusalem and the surrounding region can drop below freezing. In winter, flocks are generally kept in sheepfolds; it is extremely difficult for shepherds to spend nights in the open fields during this season. It also seems unreasonable, under winter conditions, for a pregnant woman to undertake a journey of approximately 150 kilometers from

Nazareth to Bethlehem for the purpose of a census registration. On the other hand, conditions in the spring and autumn months are far more suitable: flocks are pastured in the fields, travel conditions are safer, and the climate is bearable for a pregnant traveler.

The Quran's Sign of the Date Palm

In verses 22–26 of Sūrat Maryam, the detail of the date palm beside which Mary gave birth is given, and she is told to "shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you — it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you." This expression clearly indicates that the date-ripening season was underway. In Palestine, date palms ripen from the end of August through September–October. This information supports the view that the birth of Prophet Jesus occurred at the end of summer or in the early autumn period. Both the presence of shepherds in the fields and the season of ripened dates strongly point to the September–October period.

The Origin of the Date December 25

The date of December 25 is accepted not as the true birth date of Prophet Jesus, but as a symbolic date established during the spread of Christianity into the Roman world. This date coincides with the Roman winter solstice and the birth celebrations of the sun god Mithras. Hippolytus of Rome argued for this date among early Christian leaders, while Clement of Alexandria proposed April 19, and other sources suggested dates such as March 28, April 18, and May 29. These differences show that there was no consensus on a definitive date among the early Christian communities. In its historical context, December 25 is a product of the harmonization of pagan traditions with the new religion. This date is a theologically chosen symbolic date and does not provide a reliable source for the true birth date of Prophet Jesus.

Conclusion

The findings presented here may be gathered at the following key points:

Regarding the Quranic language: The word tawaffā carries consistently the meaning of "the taking of the soul" in the language of the Quran. Āl ʿImrān 3:55 and Al-Māʾida 5:117 clearly imply that Prophet Jesus passed away.

Regarding Al-Nisāʾ 4:157: The expression shubbiha lahum does not mean that the entire event was an illusion; rather, it rejects the Jews' appropriation of Prophet Jesus's death as their own success. What is essential is that Allah caused the death of Prophet Jesus upon the cross to appear to them perceptually.

Regarding the reality of the spirit: When it is accepted that the essential existence of the human being is the spirit, bodily death is merely an outward appearance. The death of Prophet Jesus on the cross took place in its outward form.

Regarding hadith narrations: The example of the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus demonstrates that hadith methodology neglected textual criticism and that historical inconsistencies were not sufficiently questioned. The authenticating judgments of

persons such as Imām Muslim and Abū Dāwūd are personal evaluations, not revelation, and must be reconsidered when they conflict with the clear statements of the Quran.

Regarding the date of birth of Prophet Jesus: The geographical data of the Gospel of Luke, the Quran's date palm narrative, and the climatic conditions of Palestine indicate that Prophet Jesus was born in September–October. December 25 is the product of a political rather than religious historical choice.

When the Quran is read with a verse-centered approach that takes the reality of the spirit as its foundation, the greater part of the debates surrounding Prophet Jesus finds resolution. The essential matter is not to place narrations above the Quran, to understand words within their own internal coherence, and to accept that truth lies in a far deeper layer than the outward form perceived by human beings.

Homosexuality: A Religious, Moral, and Social Evaluation

The Perspective of Religious Texts

Islam's Position

The Quran, the foundational source of Islam, addresses homosexual behavior explicitly. The most frequently cited narrative in this context is the story of Lot and his people. In Surah Al-A'raf (7:81), the stance of Lot's people is conveyed with these words: "Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people." In Surah Ash-Shu'ara (26:165-166), this behavior is characterized as "exceeding limits" and considered contrary to the purpose of human creation. The Quran's position on this matter is not merely prohibitive in nature; it also carries the quality of calling humanity back to the fitra — the original nature of creation.

Christianity's Position

The Bible also contains explicit statements regarding homosexual behavior. In Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 1 (verses 24–28), this behavior is described as "contrary to nature" and as "shameful passions":

> 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:24–28)

These verses address the behavior not merely as a matter of personal choice, but also as a reflection of turning away from God. According to the general theological understanding in Christianity, sexuality finds its meaning within the institution of marriage and for the purpose of procreation; any behavior that goes beyond these boundaries is considered a moral deviation.

The Story of Lot and Its Historical Background

The story of Lot, narrated across multiple chapters of the Quran, is not simply an account directed at a past society — it also carries the character of a universal warning. The Prophet Lot invited his people to abandon moral corruption, but his calls were rejected, and he was even threatened: "O Lot, if you do not desist, you will surely be of those expelled." (Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:167)

The fate of Lot's people is described in the Quran as follows: "The blast seized them at sunrise. And We turned it upside down and rained upon them stones of layered hard clay." (Surah Al-Hijr, 15:73–74) The expression "turned upside down" in these verses points to a great seismic disaster, while "baked stones" suggests volcanic activity.

These cities are believed to correspond to the settlements known in the Old Testament as Sodom and Gomorrah. Archaeological research indicates that the region in question corresponds to the area around the Dead Sea (the Sea of Lot). Located approximately 400 meters below sea level, the Dead Sea is interpreted as the remnant of a massive geological subsidence in the surrounding area. Research conducted in the lake has yielded fossilized trees and other organic remains — findings that corroborate the occurrence of a large-scale geological catastrophe in the region in the past. The Quran draws attention to these evidences: "Indeed in that are signs for those who discern." (Surah Al-Hijr, 15:75)

The Psychological and Scientific Dimension

The psychological origins of homosexuality have long been debated, particularly within the framework of classical psychoanalytic tradition. Sigmund Freud and many other psychoanalytic thinkers argued that sexual identity takes shape during childhood and that the relationship formed with parents plays a decisive role in this process. According to Freud, failure to establish a healthy identification with the same-sex parent may influence sexual orientation in later life. Attachment theories also offer significant contributions to this discussion. It has been suggested that children who develop insecure attachment patterns may develop different orientations when their basic emotional needs are not met. Additionally, some clinical studies indicate that traumatic experiences during childhood can have adverse effects on sexual identity development.

From the perspective of social learning theory, it is well established that media and the social environment play a shaping function in individual behavior. It has been argued that individuals in their developmental years who are exposed to environments in which homosexuality is normalized or glorified may develop tendencies in that direction.

Regarding the question of genetic causality: scientific research has thus far failed to identify a single, definitive genetic factor that determines homosexuality. Large-scale genome studies have shown that certain genetic variants may be associated with this orientation, but it has not been proven that these constitute a determinative or necessary cause. This situation brings the determining role of environmental, cultural, and psychological factors to the forefront.

Social Effects

Family Structure and the Question of Future Generations

From traditional and religious perspectives, the family institution — consisting of a man, a woman, and children — is regarded as the cornerstone of society. According to this understanding, any factor that weakens the family structure also threatens the future of society. Various psychological approaches also emphasize that children need both a mother figure and a father figure for healthy identity development.

The Health Dimension

Some health statistics indicate that certain sexual behaviors carry a higher risk with respect to sexually transmitted diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. It should be noted, however, that these data are related to behavioral risks and should not be generalized to encompass an entire community.

Understanding, Awareness, and Balance

The issue of homosexuality is a complex subject encompassing numerous intertwined religious, moral, psychological, and social dimensions. Major world religions, including Islam and Christianity, have explicitly prohibited this behavior and invited the individual toward a life in accordance with their innate nature. The story of Lot's people, in this context, retains its value not merely as a historical reference, but as a universal lesson and warning.

In society's approach to this issue, it is of great importance that two fundamental principles be observed together: clarity on principles and compassion toward people. Rather than exclusion, violence, or humiliation, adopting an approach grounded in education, awareness, and love is in harmony with both religious teachings and the understanding of human dignity. Strengthening the family institution, providing young people with healthy identity models, and reminding the media of its responsibility on this matter can be counted among the fundamental steps for preserving societal health.

The wisdom behind the Quran's narration of past stories is not merely to impart information, but to hold a mirror up to humanity — a mirror that helps us see, both individually and collectively, where we stand.

Modern Man's Existential Crisis and the Search for Meaning: The Reality Beyond Addiction

Throughout human history, no era has possessed material capabilities as vast as

today's. The technological revolution — spanning smartphones, artificial intelligence, modern medicine, and global transportation networks — has transformed human life in nearly every domain. Yet, paradoxically, the people of this age of abundance may constitute the generation experiencing the deepest crisis of meaning in history. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH, 2017) illustrates this paradox starkly. According to the survey, approximately 21.8 million Americans aged 12 and older use drugs. Alcohol use affects an even broader population: 52% of Americans in the same age group were identified as alcohol users, 24% as heavy drinkers, and 7% as chronic heavy users. These figures point not merely to a public health problem, but to deep fractures in the spiritual architecture of civilization. So what fuels such a widespread need for escape in the world's most developed nation? The answer must be sought not only in individual weakness or social pressures, but in modern man's existential loneliness and poverty of meaning.

Addiction: A Weakness or a Cry?

A large portion of society interprets addiction as a failure of willpower or a moral collapse. This perspective is both inadequate and dangerous, because it keeps the problem at the surface and prevents any examination of its roots. Addiction is, in reality, a desperate escape mechanism that individuals resort to when they can no longer bear the weight they carry. When the human mind avoids confronting unbearable pain, it seeks alternative realities. Alcohol and drugs frequently become the tools of choice in this search, because they temporarily numb pain, silence the mind, and offer the individual an artificial sense of relief. But the price of this temporary relief is steep: dependency, withdrawal, physical deterioration, and social isolation. What is most striking here is this: what is the person trying to numb? In most cases, the answer is the same — meaninglessness. Even individuals who are materially satisfied, socially accepted, and professionally successful can feel this void. Because a human being is not a creature that finds fulfillment merely when fed and sheltered. The spiritual dimension of the person carries needs that reach far beyond material satisfaction.

Three Fundamental Questions and the Existential Crisis

The most enduring questions in the history of philosophy — "Who am I?", "What am I doing in this world?", and "Where am I going?" — are not mere objects of intellectual curiosity. These questions form the foundational pillars of an individual's psychological health. Identity, purpose, and direction: these three elements function as the existential anchors that keep a person tethered to life. The modern world is remarkably effective at burying these questions. The constant stimulation of social media, the relentlessly stoked desires of consumer culture, and a speed-driven lifestyle keep individuals so occupied that they have no opportunity for deep self-examination. Lost in the noise, people stop asking who they are and begin measuring how much they have. A generation is being raised that measures success by career, worth by consumption, and happiness by the number of likes on social media. Yet these deceptive metrics do not quench existential thirst. On the contrary, they drive the individual into a deeper dissatisfaction. Because the question of who a person is cannot be answered by what they possess. The individual who leaves this question

unanswered is condemned to live with a quietly gnawing sense of emptiness — and it is in this emptiness that addictions take root.

Where Prosperity Fails to Promise Happiness

The relationship between economic growth and happiness contains a paradox that social scientists have studied for decades. Known as the Easterlin Paradox, this phenomenon demonstrates that beyond a certain income threshold, increasing personal wealth does not proportionally increase happiness. That is, more money, more possessions, larger homes, and more powerful cars cease — at a certain point — to make people happier. These findings can also be verified intuitively. Rates of depression and anxiety in wealthy nations are significantly higher than in many developing countries. The elevated rates of addiction and suicide among celebrities, top executives, and those the world regards as "having everything" are clear evidence that materialism cannot meet the spiritual needs of human beings. Modern consumer society keeps individuals in a cycle of dissatisfaction by continually injecting them with new desires. Advertisements sell not a product, but the happiness, status, and love that the product allegedly provides. Yet when the product is purchased, the promised happiness does not arrive — a new desire appears at the door. Because this vicious cycle offers no solution to the individual's genuine needs, satisfaction is never lasting.

The Neglect of the Spiritual Dimension: A Silent Destruction

One of the most fundamental characteristics that distinguishes human beings from other living creatures is the deep need to seek meaning. Viktor Frankl, drawing on the experiences of his years in Nazi concentration camps, argued in his logotherapy theory that the primary drive of human beings is not pleasure or power, but meaning. A person who cannot find meaning is left helpless in the face of suffering and descends into existential collapse. Islam expresses this truth from a far more foundational and universal perspective. Verse 56 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat in the Quran states: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." This verse can be read not merely as a religious commandment, but as a foundational principle that charts the existential map of the human being. When a person lives in relationship with their Creator, they are able to understand who they are, why they exist, and where they are going. The individual who finds answers to these three questions undergoes a profound transformation in their psychological world: identity becomes clear, purpose becomes defined, and the future loses its ambiguity. A person who neglects their spiritual dimension feels this absence in the depths of their being, even if they cannot name it — as an inexplicable void in the heart, a wound that does not close at night, a sense of meaninglessness that collapses in the middle of the day. This feeling cannot be covered over by material success, because what gives rise to it is not a material deprivation but a spiritual thirst.

Fitrah: The Compass of Human Nature

In Islamic thought, the concept of fitrah denotes the authentic nature of the human being — the pure state at creation and the universal inclinations embedded within it. According to this concept, when a person lives in harmony with a certain set of

values and beliefs, they find inner peace; when they deviate from this harmony, unease and loss of meaning become inevitable. The individual living in accordance with their fitrah experiences the dignity that honesty brings, the fulfillment that sharing provides, and the tranquility secured by their relationship with their Creator. These are forms of inner satisfaction that no substance or external stimulus can replicate. The individual severed from their fitrah searches for this satisfaction elsewhere — and what they most often find is merely a temporary numbing, followed by an even deeper emptiness. Viewed from this perspective, addiction ceases to be solely a medical problem and becomes a symptom of spiritual lostness. When a person loses themselves — when they do not know who they are or why they exist — they become ready to cling to anything that might fill that void.

Beyond Escape: Toward a Real Solution

When the struggle against addiction is confined solely to medical treatment and social support programs, only the visible surface of the problem is addressed. Without resolving the underlying poverty of meaning, it is highly likely that the individual will escape one addiction only to turn toward another mechanism of avoidance. The real solution begins with reminding the person of who they are. This means reconnecting with their historical, cultural, and spiritual roots. A person who establishes a bond with their Creator, internalizes the understanding that their life has a purpose, and arrives at a comprehensive existential outlook that includes even death, largely loses their need for temporary escapes. Because meaning is the force that makes even suffering bearable. Strengthening family bonds, rebuilding a sense of community, and restoring the place of spiritual education in individual life are indispensable elements of this process. Knowing that one is not alone, that one serves a purpose, and that one will ultimately be held accountable — this makes a person both responsible and at peace.

A True Answer to the Thirst for Meaning

In conclusion, the addiction crisis of the modern world is the reflection of a far deeper crisis of meaning than any surface-level behavioral disorder. When a person does not know who they are, cannot understand why they exist in this world, and lacks a guide as to where they are going, they become ready to grasp at anything that might fill that void. Alcohol, drugs, and other addictions are temporary fillers of this emptiness — but none of them can offer a lasting solution. The lasting solution lies in the human being's return to their fitrah, in the discovery of their purpose in creation, and in the meaningful relationship they establish with their Creator. When this bond is formed, the transient pleasures offered by the material world give way to a deeper and more enduring peace. Addiction is not an ending — it is a cry. And the true answer to this cry must be not merely chemical, but existential.

Kafir: The One Who Covers the Truth

The word kafir is an Arabic-origin term derived from the root "k-f-r," which carries meanings such as "to cover" and "to conceal." The word kafir is derived from this root and literally means "one who conceals" or "one who covers over." Originally, kafir was used to describe a person who covers something up or hides it. Arabs would even

use the word kafir in agriculture, referring to the act of covering seeds with soil after planting. In other words, kafir was not originally a purely religious term but carried a more general meaning of "concealer" or "one who covers over."

By its etymological origin, then, kafir means "to cover." This refers not merely to a physical covering, but to the deliberate disregarding of truth and reality. The kafir is a person who covers over the truth; they do not wish to see it, they suppress their conscience, and they close their ears to it. This condition points to a deep spiritual blindness and insensitivity that determines how a person stands in the face of truth.

There is within human nature an inclination to seek and understand the truth. Yet the kafir suppresses this natural tendency. Even as truth stands plainly before their eyes, they turn a blind eye to it. This blindness is not ignorance — it is a deliberate and willful choice.

In verse 5 of Surah Hud, it is expressed that Allah is aware of all things, and that nothing concealed or revealed can be hidden from Him:

> "Verily, they fold up their breasts to hide from Him. Surely, even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. Indeed, He is the Knower of what is in the breasts."

This verse shows that the kafir's intentions and actions are evaluated from a divine perspective. No matter how much a person covers the truth, it is no secret to Allah. This covering is often the result of suppressing the conscience, closing the heart to truth, and becoming blinded by ignorance.

There is a deep connection between kufr (disbelief), shirk, and nifaq (hypocrisy). Every mushrik is simultaneously a kafir, because shirk means denying the oneness of Allah and placing one's own fabrications over the truth — which is another form of covering the truth. Similarly, every hypocrite is also a kafir, because the hypocrite, despite knowing the truth, rejects it at the level of belief and action. An inner denial merges with an outward lie, thus entirely suppressing the truth.

Reasons Why the Kafir Covers the Truth:

1. Selfishness and Pride: The kafir knows that accepting the truth requires also acknowledging their own wrongs. This wounds their pride and could stir their conscience. To prevent this, they cover over the truth.

2. Conflict with Self-Interest: When the truth conflicts with the kafir's material or worldly interests, they reject it. This causes the person to completely sever their connection with the truth.

3. Fear and Weakness: The kafir fears taking on the responsibility that truth brings. Truth places an obligation upon a person, and this obligation is perceived as a threat by those of weak character.

The attitude of the kafir can be likened to that of someone engrossed in play and amusement. Play and amusement symbolize a person's attachment to the world

instead of the truth. This represents a person placing temporary pleasures and worldly desires ahead of the truth. In this way, truth is pushed aside and the person retreats into their own world.

Kufr is not only an individual condition — it can also be a societal disease. The covering of truth can lead to the spiritual collapse of a society. In verse 5 of Surah Hud, by reminding us that Allah is aware of all things, it is emphasized that a person must keep their conscience clean and maintain an open stance toward the truth. This verse calls to mind the reckoning within a person's inner world and Allah's all-encompassing knowledge.

In conclusion, covering the truth is to bury oneself in darkness. Rather than covering their conscience, a person should polish it like a mirror, remain open to the truth, and shape their life with this awareness.

Contradictions Between Catechismal Religion and the Quran: The Necessity of Returning to the Source

Religion, as one of the most deep-rooted institutions in human history, serves the need of individuals and societies to find meaning, establish a moral framework, and gain spiritual direction. Islam also aims to fulfill this function through its foundational source, the Holy Quran. However, the jurisprudential accumulations, hadith literature, and catechismal traditions that emerged over the course of history have, over time, transformed into a legal structure that is disconnected from the letter and spirit of the Quran, and internally inconsistent. Here, we will attempt to examine these inconsistencies from both rational and scriptural perspectives, focusing on specific points where the traditional catechismal understanding conflicts with Quranic verses.

1. Touching the Quran Without Ablution Is Forbidden, Yet Reading It Is Permitted: A Paradox Within Jurisprudence Itself

According to the traditional catechismal understanding, a person without ablution may not physically touch the Quran; yet that same person is free to recite the Quran from memory or follow along on a digital screen without ablution. While this ruling may seem acceptable at first glance, it brings a fundamental logical problem to the fore. If the essential concern is the reverence owed to the sacred message of the Quran, why is that reverence restricted to the act of physical touching? The distinction between the sanctity of the message and the sanctity of the physical object that carries it has been drawn not by the Quran itself, but largely by a tradition of legal interpretation developed after the fact.

Indeed, when one considers that millions of people today read the Quran through smartphones, tablets, and computers, the scope of this prohibition becomes thoroughly ambiguous. On what basis is a distinction drawn between a person who reads the Quran digitally without ablution and one who holds a printed copy without ablution?

The Quran's only relevant guidance on this matter appears in Surah An-Nahl, verse 98:

"When you recite the Quran, seek refuge in Allah from the expelled Satan."

What is striking is this: the verse proposes only a spiritual preparation before the act of reading — it imposes no physical cleanliness requirement whatsoever. There is no clear and binding ruling within the Quran itself stipulating that ablution must be performed before reading it. As for Surah Al-Waqi'ah, verse 79 — "None shall touch it except the purified" — which is sometimes cited as a basis for this prohibition, this is not a worldly ablution requirement. Yet its use as evidence for a prohibition on physical touching reveals just how liberally the exegetical tradition has allowed itself to interpret scripture.

2. The Prohibition on Quran Recitation for Women in a State of Major Ritual Impurity or Menstruation: An Internal Inconsistency

Another prohibition that traditional catechismal books insist upon is that individuals in a state of major ritual impurity (janabah) and women who are menstruating are forbidden from reciting the Quran. Yet those same sources acknowledge that such individuals may recite Quranic verses with the intention of supplication. Here a glaring logical collapse occurs. A verse recited with the intention of prayer is an inseparable part of the Quran. A verse does not change in nature depending on the intention with which it is read. While the essence, content, and sanctity of the verse remain constant, on what principle is a distinction drawn between one who reads it as supplication and one who reads it as Quran?

When the Quran is consulted, the following is found in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 222, which addresses the subject of menstruation:

"And they ask you about menstruation. Say: It is harm, so keep away from women during menstruation and do not approach them until they are pure. When they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves."

This verse contains only a prohibition concerning sexual intercourse. It contains no restriction on prayer, Quranic recitation, or any form of worship. The scope of this foundational verse, which directly addresses the subject of menstruation, has been systematically expanded in traditional interpretations into a series of prohibitions extending across many areas of life. This is clear evidence that what has been dressed in theological garb is not the source of the religion itself, but rather cultural and social norms that have crystallized over time.

3. Prayer and Fasting for Menstruating Women: The Contradiction Between Prohibition and Makeup Obligation

One of the most striking internal contradictions in the traditional catechismal understanding manifests itself in the matter of prayer and fasting for menstruating women. According to this understanding, it is forbidden for such women to perform the daily prayers or fast during their menstrual period. At the same time, while a makeup obligation is imposed for missed fasts, no such requirement is prescribed

for prayers. This arrangement invites a fundamental question: if fasting during menstruation is a forbidden act, why is it then made obligatory to make it up later? Imposing a subsequent obligation to compensate for something that was forbidden contradicts the general logic of Islamic law, since makeup obligations typically apply to acts that were missed or performed with a valid excuse — not to acts that were categorically forbidden.

The Quran addresses fasting in a more flexible framework in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 184:

"It is a limited number of days. So whoever among you is ill or on a journey — then an equal number of other days. And upon those who are able to fast, but with hardship — a ransom of feeding a poor person. And whoever volunteers good — it is better for him. And that you fast is better for you, if you only knew."

The Quran here lists illness and travel as legitimate grounds for postponing the fast. Menstruation, however, does not fully fall into either of these categories — it is neither an illness nor a journey. No specific prohibition or ruling to defer acts of worship on the grounds of menstruation exists in the Quran. All such rulings originated from post-Quranic jurisprudential interpretation and were gradually granted a legitimacy as though they derived from revelation itself.

In popular understanding, menstruation is sometimes perceived as an illness. However, menstruation indicates not that a woman is ill, but that she is healthy — experiencing a temporary discomfort, not a pathological condition. There is an important distinction between illness and discomfort. Discomfort is a temporary state of unease, pain, or distress, and does not always signify a disorder. The abdominal cramps, fatigue, and mood changes experienced during menstruation are forms of discomfort. Illness, by contrast, is a disruption of the body's normal functioning — a pathological condition requiring treatment. With menstruation, the very opposite is true:

- The body continues its normal functioning without disruption.

- A regular biological cycle occurs each month.

In other words, menstruation is an entirely natural and regular biological process related to the female reproductive system. The uterus prepares each month for pregnancy; when pregnancy does not occur, this prepared inner lining is shed from the body through bleeding. This is called menstruation.

4. The Prohibition on Menstruating Women Entering the Mosque

Within the framework of traditional catechismal rules, while a menstruating woman is forbidden from entering a mosque, that same woman is free to walk outside, enter parks and shopping centers, and go about her daily life without restriction. This distinction raises the question of what difference exists between a mosque and other spaces. If all of the earth has been accepted as a place of worship, how can it be reconciled that a menstruating woman may freely be in the streets, the marketplace, and the garden — but not enter a mosque?

Does this distinction arise from the physical nature of the space, or from social custom? The Quran contains no such prohibition. There is no explicit ruling in the Quran indicating that a distinction is made between men and women regarding access to Allah's places of worship. This prohibition too was largely shaped in later jurisprudential works and, drawing upon the Quran's silence on the matter, was elevated into a general ruling.

5. The Limits of Traditional Interpretation and the Necessity of Returning to the Source

The four issues examined above, though they may appear to be superficial details, in fact point to a deeper epistemological problem: What is the source of religion, and to what extent is that source being faithfully upheld?

The schools of jurisprudence that emerged in the early period of Islamic history bore the imprint of their own social and cultural conditions. Seeking to address the needs of their era, these schools developed rulings largely based on custom, social norms, and the medical understanding of their time. Many of the rulings set forth on subjects such as the female body, menstruation, major ritual impurity, and cleanliness drew upon the purity and pollution concepts of the ancient world — concepts that find very limited correspondence in the Quran itself.

The problem lies in the presentation of these rulings — stripped of their historical and cultural context — as universal principles grounded in the Quran itself. This process laid the groundwork for a religious authority that surpassed the limits set by the Quran, and over time caused the distance between the Quran and these interpretations to become invisible.

The Quran offers a clear warning on this matter in Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 43:

"So hold firmly to what has been revealed to you; indeed, you are on a straight path."

This verse is not an addendum to be burdened with secondary meanings, but an expression of the confidence owed to the wholeness of revelation itself.

The Friends of Allah and the Friends of Taghut: Two Paths in the Light of the Quran

Islam is a universal religion that carries humanity from darkness to light, offering both an individual and a social roadmap. The Quran, the primary source of this religion, presents people not only with forms of worship but also with a profound worldview to give meaning to life. At the center of this worldview lies a very clear distinction: the friends of Allah and the friends of Taghut. Verse 257 of Surah Al-Baqarah states this distinction with full clarity: "Allah is the Wali (protector) of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their allies are Taghut; they take them out of light into darkness." This verse is not merely a matter of belief — it is a matter of existential choice. In this world, a person is obliged to choose one of two paths: either to turn toward the friendship of Allah, or to stray down the path of Taghut.

The Friendship of Allah: A Journey from Darkness to Light

In the Quran, the relationship between Allah and the believers is defined as the relationship of wali and believer. The concept of "wali" carries not only the meaning of guardianship but also deep closeness, love, and guidance. Allah does not leave His believing servants alone; He guides them out of spiritual darkness and into the light of truth. The foundation of this friendship is faith. Yet faith is not merely an abstract acceptance. Surah Al-Imran, verse 68, states: "Indeed, the most worthy of Abraham among the people are those who followed him, and this prophet, and those who believe. And Allah is the ally of the believers." This verse reveals the inseparable bond between faith and action. Following the path of our Prophet Abraham is possible not merely by loving him, but by living as he did. The believer who earns the friendship of Allah takes the Quran as a guide to fulfill the requirements of this relationship. The Quran is a divine guide that shapes both the individual morality and the social stance of a person. The believer who enters this path is obliged to stand against false beliefs, polytheism, and oppression. They take on the responsibility of caring not only for their own salvation, but for the well-being of all humanity.

Taghut: The Source of Deviation

It is impossible to grasp this distinction without understanding what Taghut is. In the Quran, Taghut is defined as "that which is rebellious and transgressing, which exceeds divine boundaries and leads people astray." This definition does not reduce Taghut to a specific person or object. Taghut may sometimes manifest as Satan, sometimes as idols, and sometimes as unjust rulers devoid of justice. In its essence, Taghut is every kind of power that steps beyond the boundaries set by Allah and tries to pull people beyond those boundaries as well. Verse 257 of Surah Al-Baqarah inverts Taghut's function in a striking way: it drives people from light into darkness. This is not merely a physical darkness, but a profound darkness in the sense of ignorance, deviation, submission to oppression, and distance from truth. The friends of Taghut are those who have chosen to remain in this darkness, or who have been drawn into it without realizing it.

The Trap of Man-Made Doctrines

In the picture drawn by the Quran, friendship with Taghut can manifest not only through open denial but also through subtler and more dangerous forms. People may place man-made doctrines, hadiths, community loyalties, or social pressure above divine commandments. This is a typical example of straying from Allah's path without being aware of it. The Quran repeatedly draws attention to this danger. Obeying the commands of oppressive rulers, embracing false systems that distort the truth, or giving unconditional obedience to authorities other than the word of Allah — all of these bring a person closer to the friendship of Taghut. Therefore, every believer's duty is to evaluate every belief and practice by the measure of the Quran.

The Spider's Web Metaphor: The Deep Wisdom of the Quran

The Quran sometimes uses metaphors drawn from nature to guide humanity. One of the most striking of these appears in Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 41:

"The example of those who take allies other than Allah is like the spider who takes a

home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew."

Even at a surface reading, this metaphor contains a powerful message. However, looking at the subtleties of the Arabic language reveals even deeper meanings. The verb "ittahazat" used in the verse is in the feminine form, clearly indicating that the metaphor specifically targets the female spider. In many translations this detail has been overlooked and the verse has been rendered simply as "a spider." Yet this choice conceals the scientific depth of the verse. Scientific data shows that female spiders are much larger than males and dominant in the web-spinning process. More significantly, a large proportion of female spiders kill and eat the male after mating. This fact provides a scientific basis for the verse's description of "the weakest of homes." The home built by the female spider is not even safe for her own kind — it can become a trap. On the other hand, spider silk is among the strongest materials produced in nature. It is known to exhibit a much higher tensile strength when compared to steel of the same thickness. Yet the home woven from this silk falls apart with the slightest physical intervention. This contradiction carries the deep irony at the heart of the metaphor: an apparently extremely strong material is still insufficient to build a reliable shelter.

The Universal Message of the Metaphor

This verse in Surah Al-Ankabut directs a fundamental critique at humanity's search for security. By nature, a person seeks a protective refuge. This refuge may sometimes be a position of authority, sometimes wealth, and sometimes an influential person or group. The Quran compares all such pursuits to the home of the female spider: they appear magnificent and feel solid, but when a real trial comes, they crumble and disappear. Every power trusted other than Allah will ultimately leave a person alone. In this world, political power collapses, wealth is exhausted, social status is erased. In the Hereafter, these bonds break completely — for no being can offer support against the judgment of Allah. Just as the home of the female spider is fragile and temporary, every support other than Allah is equally brittle and deceptive.

Two Paths, One Choice

The Quran clearly lays two paths before humanity. The first path opens toward the friendship of Allah — on this path, a person emerges from darkness into light, attains truth, and builds their life on a solid foundation. The second path follows the way of Taghut — on this path, no matter how powerful a structure a person leans upon, they live in a shelter as fragile and fleeting as the home of the female spider. Faith is not merely a declaration of belief; it is a way of life. True faith leads a person to act in accordance with Allah's commands, to refuse submission to oppression, and to reject every form of falsehood. The picture presented by the Quran is not addressed only to the past, but is a universal call that speaks to every age and every person. In conclusion, the greatest duty of a human being is to build their life upon a solid foundation — the friendship of Allah. Just as the spider's home is utterly fragile, every refuge other than Allah is equally so. True and lasting security is possible only

through a deep and sincere submission to Allah alone.

Sayyidhood, Lineage Supremacy, and the Qur'an's Principle of Equality

Islam presented one of the most foundational declarations of equality in human history through verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat. While this verse clearly proclaims that the only true measure of superiority among people is taqwa (piety), there are notable examples throughout history showing how far Muslim societies have strayed from this principle. The concept of sayyidhood stands out as one of the most striking manifestations of this deviation. This concept has been widely misunderstood — particularly among Kurdish communities and across much of the Islamic world — transformed into a tool of cultural prestige, and at times presented under the guise of religious sanctity.

The True Meaning of Sayyidhood and Its Historical Background

The word sayyid literally means "master" or "leader." In Islamic literature, this title is attributed to the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly those from the lineage of Caliph Ali and Fatimah. However, a fundamental distinction must be drawn here: since lineage in Islam is traced patrilineally rather than matrilineally, the title of sayyid is technically granted to the male descendants through Caliph Ali's line. Thus, the lineage established through the Prophet's daughter Fatimah has become identified with Ali's progeny through the principle of paternal descent.

Even this historical reality presents grounds for debate. Over the centuries, the number of families claiming sayyid status has grown to a crowd that strains demographic credibility. Moreover, in eras where genealogical records were transmitted through oral tradition and documentation was extremely limited, verifying such claims became nearly impossible.

The Ottoman Period and the Instrumentalization of Sayyidhood

During the Ottoman Empire, the title of sayyidhood was visibly instrumentalized. Some Kurdish tribes and families in Anatolia and Mesopotamia claimed sayyid status in order to reinforce their social standing, gain communal authority, or benefit from practical privileges such as tax exemptions. This process deepened to such a degree that over time these families convinced not only their communities but themselves of this belief.

At this point, it is appropriate to offer a concrete example from my own family history. The village now known as Ortaköy, in the Idil district of Şırnak, appears in 1928 records under the name "Sheikh Hasan." When state records are queried, the first entry encountered is Sheikh Hasan. Although this family has been identified with sayyidhood in the region, I personally and explicitly reject this identity — because the Prophet Muhammad had no male children, and to claim sayyid status without a traceable descent from Caliph Ali amounts to both a denial of one's true lineage and a false attribution to the Prophet Muhammad. Both outcomes are incompatible with Islamic ethics.

The Rejection of Lineage Supremacy from a Qur'anic Perspective

Verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat makes clear that the diversity among people exists not to establish a hierarchy of superiority, but to facilitate mutual recognition and understanding. This divine declaration directly rejects lineage, race, tribe, or any innate characteristic as a criterion for superiority. It follows, then, that even being descended from the Prophet Muhammad cannot in itself constitute a basis for superiority. For lineage is not a quality obtained through one's own will; taqwa, by contrast, requires conscious choice and sustained effort.

Misperception Among the People and the Dimension of Superstition

The meaning that sayyidhood has acquired in Kurdish folk culture has moved considerably beyond the framework envisioned by the Qur'an. In many regions, sayyids have been enveloped in an almost untouchable sanctity, and criticizing them has come to be perceived as something close to a religious offense. The primary source feeding this misperception is the fact that the people have learned Islam not directly from the Qur'an, but through oral traditions, tariqa teachings, and cultural transmission.

One of the clearest proofs of this is the place held in popular culture by books such as Kenzü'l-Havvâs — works containing mystical rituals, amulet recipes, and magical practices incompatible with Islam, yet accepted as legitimate solely because their author bore a sayyid identity. This plainly reveals that sayyidhood has at times functioned as a religious shield, providing cover for the circulation of content harmful to Islam.

Political Instrumentalization: The Example of Sayyid Abdulkadir

An important example showing that sayyidhood has been instrumentalized not only in the religious-cultural sphere but also in the political arena is Sayyid Abdulkadir and the Kurdish Elevation Society (Kürt Teali Cemiyeti) he founded. Movements of this kind — which sought to legitimize political ambitions through religious identity — damaged the universal brotherhood and unity of the ummah envisioned by Islam. This approach, which blended ethnic separatism with religious identity, stands in direct contradiction to both the political and moral principles of Islam.

The Individual and Social Cost of Historical Falsehood

For a person to carry a lineage claim they do not actually possess is not merely an individual error; its social and religious dimensions are also profoundly serious. First, the individual ends up denying their own true lineage. Second, an unfounded claim of descent from the Prophet Muhammad becomes a form of spiritual slander against him. Third, and perhaps most importantly, such claims construct a false religious hierarchy within society, laying the groundwork for people to serve lineage rather than serve God.

Sects, Tariqas, and Institutionalized Fallacy

Another element that deepens the issue of sayyidhood is the role that tariqa and community structures assign to this title. Within these structures, being a sayyid is treated as sufficient justification for spiritual leadership — a position that conflicts

with the Qur'an's understanding of leadership. The Qur'an associates spiritual authority not with lineage but with knowledge, taqwa, and moral character. The tendency to present the rulings of legal schools as absolute truths also poses a serious obstacle to the people's direct engagement with the Qur'an. Within this cycle, sayyidhood has become institutionalized as an unquestionable authority, and Islam's liberating principle of equality has been suppressed.

The issue of sayyidhood is not merely a historical error; it is a living example reflecting deep fractures in the religious understanding of contemporary Muslim societies. Overcoming these fractures requires several fundamental steps. Above all, the people must be enabled to learn Islam directly from the Qur'an. A society that turns to the Qur'an independently — free from superstitions, cultural transmissions, and the interpretations of authority figures — will find no fertile ground for claims of lineage superiority.

Furthermore, if sayyidhood is to carry any meaning at all, that meaning must be rooted not in the demand for privilege but in the responsibility of service. Descending from the Prophet Muhammad — even if such a claim were true — confers upon a person not superiority, but a heavier burden of responsibility.

Finally, this must be emphasized: Islam teaches that a person needs neither an intermediary nor an obstacle to reach God. Every hierarchy constructed by placing lineage, title, or genealogy in between stands contrary to the spirit of this teaching. The Qur'an's message is clear: the most valued person is the most pious. And this criterion is an individual responsibility that cannot be delegated to any family registry, any title, or any order.

Relations with Non-Muslims in Islam

Throughout Islamic history, the relationships between Muslims and the People of the Book — particularly Christians and Jews — have been interpreted in various ways depending on the political climate, geographical conditions, and the religious understanding of the era. However, some of these interpretations developed in isolation from the Quran's holistic message, with certain verses being stripped of their context and given distorted meanings. This article examines one of the most striking examples of such misinterpretation — verse 51 of Surah Al-Ma'idah — and then outlines the Quran's general stance on relations with the People of the Book.

1. Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 51: A Correct Reading of the Concept of "Awliya"

Verse 51 of Surah Al-Ma'idah has been interpreted for centuries as forbidding Muslims from having any form of friendship with Christians and Jews. Yet this interpretation carries serious problems both linguistically and contextually. The key word in the verse is the Arabic term awliya (أولياء), the plural of wali. In Arabic dictionaries, wali is not limited to the meaning of "friend"; it encompasses a broad semantic range including "protector," "guardian," "trustee," "guide," "authority figure," and "ally." Indeed, the same root is used in various parts of the Quran to denote state authority, guardianship, and protection. Drawing on this linguistic reality, the verse's intended message becomes far clearer: Muslims are advised not to place

themselves under an authority or governance that could restrict their faith and worship. In other words, the verse targets not everyday friendships or human relationships, but rather political and legal dependency relationships in which religious freedoms could be endangered. In this context, the verse can be understood as emphasizing that a society with a Muslim majority should be governed according to Islamic principles. Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates that the verse does not justify a universal and absolute hostility toward the People of the Book. Instead, it points to a specific historical situation characterized by dependency, submission, and a threat to religious identity.

2. The Quran's Holistic Message: Relations with the People of the Book

Reading verse 51 of Surah Al-Ma'idah in isolation is wholly insufficient for grasping the Quran's attitude toward the People of the Book. In many other passages, the Quran paints a far more comprehensive and nuanced picture regarding relations with Christians and Jews. In verse 282 of Surah Al-Baqarah, the word wali, derived from the same root, is used to mean "trustworthy witness" or "authorized guardian" — a usage that goes well beyond the meaning of "friend" and points instead to a relationship of responsibility and trust. Interpretations that ignore the fact that a single concept can carry different meanings in different contexts inevitably lead to semantic drift and erroneous conclusions. Verses 113 and 75 of Surah Al-Imran explicitly state that the People of the Book are not a monolithic whole; among them are honest, trustworthy, and truthful individuals. These verses demonstrate that Islam does not categorize people solely by their religious identity, but places great importance on universal values such as moral integrity, loyalty, and justice. Even if a person is Christian or Jewish, there is no religious barrier to forming a relationship with them, provided they are morally upright and trustworthy.

3. The Question of Marriage: The Distinction Between Mushriks and the People of the Book

The Quran's regulations on marriage also occupy an important place in understanding this issue. While the prohibition on marrying mushriks (mushrikeen) is explicitly stated in the Quran, this prohibition does not apply to the People of the Book. A correct understanding of the concept of mushrik is decisive here: a mushrik is one who associates partners with God. The Quran uses this term not in reference to the People of the Book, but toward all who commit shirk — including Muslims who do so. For example, turning to someone other than God — such as a renowned sheikh or saintly figure — and seeking intercession from them constitutes a form of shirk. Christians and Jews who do not associate partners with God therefore fall outside the scope of this prohibition. Indeed, verse 5 of Surah Al-Ma'idah explicitly permits Muslim men to marry women from the People of the Book. This demonstrates that a union as deep and intimate as marriage can be formed with the People of the Book, thereby indicating that friendship and companionship — which are far less binding — are certainly permissible.

4. The Dimension of Da'wah in Friendship: The Importance of a Wise Relationship

Verse 82 of Surah Al-Ma'idah contains a remarkable observation: it states that the

communities closest to Muslims in affection are to be found among Christians. This verse carries a powerful indication that the bridges between the two communities must not be completely destroyed. On the contrary, these bridges are valuable foundations upon which dialogue, understanding, and peace can be built. In today's world, technology, communication, and access to information have accelerated enormously, yet in many parts of the globe people still lack adequate access to digital platforms. It is possible to encounter the message of Islam not only through media or the internet, but also through face-to-face, sincere, trust-based relationships. Indeed, it is well known that many people's perception of Islam has changed profoundly after coming to know Muslims personally. This reality demonstrates that good character, honesty, and compassion are themselves instruments of da'wah. Throughout history, the individual relationships and moral conduct of merchants and travelers played a decisive role in the spread of Islam across vast territories — showing that Islam spread not by the sword, but through trust, honesty, and noble character. Therefore, a wisely cultivated friendship with Christians and Jews not only contributes to social peace, but also serves as a means of conveying Islam's universal message to wider audiences.

5. An Assessment in Light of Islam's Fundamental Principles

When all these verses and their contextual analyses are considered together, the picture that emerges is unmistakably clear: Islam does not regard every non-Muslim as an enemy or as an "other" to be excluded. On the contrary, it consistently emphasizes that morality, honesty, and justice are the cornerstones of human relationships. One point deserving particular attention is this: in Islamic jurisprudence and in the general spirit of the Quran, when addressing relations with non-Muslims, a clear distinction is drawn between "oppression and aggression" on the one hand and "peaceful coexistence" on the other. While cooperation with an authority that harms Muslims or restricts their religious freedoms is deemed inappropriate, the doors to friendship and solidarity with people who live in peace and share common values remain wide open.

The misinterpretation of verse 51 of Surah Al-Ma'idah has, throughout history, caused serious harm to relations between Islam and other faith traditions. Yet a linguistically and contextually accurate reading of the concept of awliya clearly reveals that the verse does not constitute a prohibition on friendship, but rather a warning against political dependencies that would threaten religious freedom. The Quran's holistic message regarding relations with the People of the Book can be summarized as follows: differences in belief do not necessarily bring with them enmity or rupture. Honesty, trustworthiness, and moral virtue are values that transcend religious boundaries. Muslims can build healthy, respectful, and wise relationships with Christians and Jews on the basis of these universal values — contributing to world peace and, by embodying Islam's noble character in those relationships, carrying out the most powerful form of da'wah of all. The mercy of Islam does not encompass Muslims alone; as a religion of compassion embracing all of humanity, it carries a universal invitation. And the finest ambassadors of that invitation are Muslims themselves — free from all prejudice, committed to justice and mercy as their guiding principles.

Brotherhood, Solidarity, and Social Responsibility in Islam

An Evaluation in Light of Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 71

Islam is not merely a religion aimed at individual salvation; it is a comprehensive way of life that seeks to build social peace, justice, and solidarity. At the heart of this order lies the deep, faith-based bond of brotherhood established among believers. This brotherhood carries far greater meaning than an ordinary social relationship, for the Quran defines this bond as a religious duty and responsibility.

The Religious Foundation of Brotherhood Among Believers

Verse 71 of Surah At-Tawbah concisely reveals the spirit and logic of Islamic society. The verse declares that believing men and women are each other's "awliya" (guardians/allies). In Arabic, the concept of "wali" simultaneously carries the meanings of friend, helper, protector, and guide. This multi-layered meaning demonstrates that the relationship between believers is not merely a superficial friendship. What is meant here is a holistic understanding of togetherness that encompasses mutual responsibility, sincere cooperation, and spiritual guidance. Within this religious framework, believers are not regarded as disconnected individuals, but as parts of a whole — like organs of a single body — that feel, support, and protect one another. Therefore, brotherhood in Islam is not a bond that remains at the level of emotion, but one that transforms into action and is lived with a sense of responsibility.

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: The Safeguard of Social Morality

One of the most fundamental characteristics of believers mentioned in Surah At-Tawbah verse 71 is "enjoining good and forbidding evil." This principle elevates individual morality to the ground of social responsibility. The importance of this principle is immense, for moral decline in a society largely stems from individuals remaining silent in the face of one another's wrongdoings and from the spread of the attitude of indifference. Islam teaches believers not to regard this silence as legitimate, and defines sensitivity toward injustice, wrongdoing, and moral corruption in one's surroundings as an act of worship. At the same time, how this duty is to be fulfilled has also been defined. Islam bases this not on a crude, hurtful, or authoritarian stance, but on an approach adorned with wisdom, kind words, and patience. Indeed, in verse 17 of Surah Luqman, a father advises his son to perform the prayer, to enjoin good and prevent evil, and to be patient and steadfast throughout this process. This verse clearly demonstrates that preaching and social responsibility cannot be sustained without patience, and must be continued with determination despite difficulties.

Conveying the Message: The Most Beautiful Worship, the Most Effective Invitation

An important dimension of believers' social responsibilities is conveying the message (tabligh). Tabligh is the duty of communicating Islam and its noble morality to people. This duty was historically entrusted to the prophets, but through them, it was also placed as a responsibility upon all believers. The most powerful form of

tabligh is not accomplished through words, but through one's way of life. A believer's honesty, compassion, patience, integrity, and conduct toward others can reach hearts that no speech could ever touch. For this reason, Islamic scholars have emphasized that tabligh must begin first with the "language of state" — that is, through one's lived example. Inconsistency between words and actions has been regarded as the greatest obstacle. Tabligh is also a long-term process that requires patience and determination. When the stories of the prophets are examined, it is seen that this path contains many difficulties. The patient centuries-long invitation of Prophet Noah, Prophet Abraham's refusal to give up despite being thrown into fire, and Prophet Muhammad's resistance to the pressures he faced during the Meccan period — these are the most powerful examples showing with what resolve the responsibility of tabligh must be carried.

Prayer and Zakat: The Social Dimension of Individual Worship

Another noteworthy point in Surah At-Tawbah verse 71 is that prayer (salah) and zakat are mentioned immediately after enjoining good and forbidding evil. This sequence is not coincidental; establishing prayer and giving zakat are the fundamental acts of worship that represent both the individual and social dimensions of Islam. Prayer is the most tangible expression of the believer's direct and deep connection with Allah. Performed five times a day, this act of worship grants the believer not merely a ritual, but a power that organizes the flow of life with religious consciousness, purifies the heart, and protects the person from arrogance, heedlessness, and worldly intoxication. A believer who performs the prayer is expected to be more responsible, more patient, and more virtuous in daily life. In this sense, prayer is the fundamental source of social morality that begins with the individual. Zakat, on the other hand, is the door through which this individual dimension opens to society. Zakat is not merely a material obligation; it is the institutional expression of the economic and humanitarian solidarity that believers establish with one another. This act of worship, which brings together the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak as parts of the same social body, is a deeply rooted solution mechanism that Islam has developed against the accumulation of wealth in certain hands. Through zakat, social divides in society do not deepen; on the contrary, material solidarity and unity of hearts among believers are strengthened.

Obedience to Allah and His Messenger: The Foundation of Individual and Social Order

The emphasis on obedience to Allah and His Messenger at the end of the verse points to the source of all these social and individual dimensions of Islam. In verse 59 of Surah An-Nisa as well, this obedience is explicitly mentioned; obedience to Allah, the Messenger, and those in authority is commanded. In Islam, obedience is not blind submission. On the contrary, it is a conscious acceptance grounded in religious wisdom and universal moral principles. While fulfilling Allah's commands, the believer is convinced that this is the most beneficial path for both themselves, society, and all of humanity. This awareness transforms obedience from a burden into a force that grants meaning and peace. From the perspective of social order, the principles set by Allah and His Messenger take shape within the framework of values

such as justice, consultation (shura), trustworthiness, and compassion. In a society operating in accordance with these principles, rights are upheld, oppression is prevented, and individuals attain peace both in this world and the hereafter.

The Value That Sustains Society: The Sense of Responsibility

When all these dimensions are brought together, it becomes evident that the fundamental element sustaining society in Islam is the sense of responsibility. This responsibility rests on three pillars: the responsibility of servitude toward Allah, the moral responsibility toward oneself, and the humanitarian responsibility toward society. In the modern world, individualism is growing increasingly strong; people are being drawn toward an understanding of existence that is self-serving and disconnected from society. Islam, however, teaches that the human being is a social creature and that this sociality must be lived not by fleeing from responsibilities, but by consciously embracing them. The believer, even when living alone, thinks of their community, prays for it, wishes for its well-being, and extends a helping hand whenever the opportunity arises.

Conclusion

Verse 71 of Surah At-Tawbah draws the ideal portrait of Islamic society. In this portrait, believing men and women are individuals who — as each other's friends, protectors, and guides — spread goodness, prevent evil, connect to Allah through prayer, contribute to society through zakat, and faithfully obey Allah and His Messenger. Bringing this ideal to life will bring about not only individual salvation, but also the construction of a peaceful, just, and compassionate society. For a sound society is built not on disconnected individuals, but on the shoulders of believers who hold fast together to the rope of Allah and act with a shared sense of responsibility. May our Lord grant us the understanding of the spirit of this verse, the living of its requirements, and the worthy carrying of this great responsibility.

Dawn Supplication (Istighfar): The Spiritual Journey of Believers

The Portrait of a Believer in the Mirror of the Quran

The Holy Quran is not merely a book of faith; it is a comprehensive guide to life that strives to shape the human being in the most perfect way. While enumerating the qualities believers must possess, this guide does not content itself with presenting an abstract ideal — it also demonstrates through concrete examples how these qualities should be reflected in daily life. Alongside virtues such as prayer, giving zakat, patience, truthfulness, and charity, the Quran draws attention to another fundamental quality of believers: seeking forgiveness at the time of dawn — that is, performing istighfar.

In verse 18 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat, while describing those chosen servants who have been given glad tidings of Paradise and who have attained Allah's mercy, the following expression appears: "And in the hours before dawn, they would seek forgiveness." In verse 17 of Surah Aal-e-Imran, as the qualities of believers are enumerated, those who seek forgiveness are described thus: "They are the patient,

the truthful, the obedient, the charitable, and those who seek forgiveness at dawn." When these two verses are considered together, it becomes clear that seeking forgiveness at the time of dawn is not merely a recommended act of worship — it is an inseparable part of the believer's identity.

When the Quran attributes a behavior to believers, it signals that this behavior must be transformed into a way of life. Here, we will explore the spiritual significance of the dawn hour, the deep meaning of istighfar, the spiritual and practical dimensions of turning to Allah in the early moments of morning, and what beginning the day with the consciousness of faith means for a believer.

The Dawn Hour: The Moment Within the Silence

The dawn hour refers to the final and most silent portion of the night. This moment — when the first light of morning has not yet appeared and the world has fallen into deep sleep — has been recognized as a special time for centuries, both by believers and by those given to deep contemplation. This period, when the vast majority of people are asleep, when noise has subsided and the bustle of the day has not yet begun, is the moment when the spirit is at its purest and the heart is most open.

This transitional moment between the darkness of night and the light of morning is like a mystical threshold where two worlds touch. In this moment, a person is neither fully immersed in worldly affairs nor completely detached from them; the soul stands at the very center of a process of purification and renewal. The designation of this time as special carries more than symbolic meaning. The human body, having slept for long hours since midnight, is also at the peak of its physiological calm at the dawn hour. The mind is purified of the daytime's anxieties and noise; consciousness has risen above surface-level preoccupations. This physiological stillness lifts the veils before spirituality and makes the person more ready to turn toward Allah.

Sleep: The Small Death, The Great Reflection

To fully grasp the significance of the dawn hour, one must first look at the place of sleep in the Quran. Allah the Almighty declares in verse 42 of Surah Az-Zumar: "Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die He takes during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

This verse clarifies that sleep is not merely a state of physical rest — it contains a profound truth in which the soul's connection to the body temporarily weakens and the person's link to the world is severed. Every night, the person who falls asleep experiences a small death. When they open their eyes in the morning, a resurrection takes place. This resurrection carries great meaning: Allah has decreed that this servant shall remain alive for another night, and has opened for them a new day, a new opportunity, a new page.

For a believer who awakens with this awareness, the first moment of morning is far more than an ordinary waking. That moment is a threshold where gratitude, repentance, and turning toward Allah naturally begin to blossom. Seeking forgiveness

at the end of the night — at that fine line between death and life — is to respond to the soul's deepest need. This is why dawn istighfar is not merely a practice of worship, but an expression of the person's profound awareness of their own existence.

Istighfar: A Meaning Beyond the Word

The word istighfar derives from the Arabic root gh-f-r, which carries the meanings of "to cover, to protect, to forgive." Commonly translated in our language as "to seek forgiveness," istighfar in fact possesses a richness of meaning on multiple levels.

At a surface glance, istighfar might appear to consist of simply saying "Astaghfirullah." However, the meaning that the Quran and Islamic scholars have invested in this concept is far deeper. Istighfar encompasses: being aware of the sins one has committed, feeling genuine remorse for those sins, sincerely intending not to fall into the same error again, and turning toward Allah with this feeling and resolve. In this sense, istighfar is the soul of repentance and the act of purification.

The Quran presents istighfar as a sign of maturity and of possessing consciousness. It is not those who do wrong who seek forgiveness, but those who are aware of their own fallibility. No matter how much a person strives to avoid grave sins, subtle flaws exist in every human being — moments of heedlessness in the heart, weaknesses in intention, failure to give sufficient thanks to Allah, failure to appreciate the value of blessings. Dawn istighfar is the path to purifying oneself of these subtle flaws and to beginning the day with a completely pure heart.

Istighfar is not a remedy to be sought only after grave sins have been committed; it is a state of continuous consciousness and spiritual vitality. The istighfar performed at dawn is the strongest link in this chain of continuity.

The Spiritual Benefits of Istighfar at Dawn

Spiritual Purification and Beginning the Day Anew: By performing istighfar at dawn, the servant is purified of the spiritual burdens of the previous day and night. The dreams experienced through the night, the scattered state accumulated in the heart, and spiritual fatigue begin to be cleansed through this istighfar. The person steps into the new day with a completely pure heart, as if reborn. This purification is not merely symbolic; psychologically, it directly affects the person's attitude, motivation, and inner peace throughout the day.

Nearness to Allah: The dawn hour is the moment when turning toward Allah and the consciousness of servitude are experienced in their purest form. As one feels this nearness ever more deeply, the spiritual bond between the person and Allah is strengthened, and the effort to preserve that bond even amid the rush of daily life intensifies.

Preparation for the Morning Prayer: The person who performs istighfar at dawn prepares for the morning prayer not only physically but also spiritually. This istighfar performed before prayer softens the heart, purifies the intention, and transforms prayer from a mere physical motion into a genuine turning toward Allah. A morning

prayer that begins with dawn istighfar draws a spiritual frame around the entire day.

Inner Peace and Tranquility: The rapid pace of our age surrounds the person's inner world with constant noise. The dawn hour is one of those rare moments when this noise is absent and the soul can hear its own voice. The istighfar performed in this silence enables the person to have an honest reckoning with themselves and with Allah. This reckoning reduces anxiety, bestows a deep tranquility upon the heart, and prepares the person to face the day in a more balanced, more resilient, and more peaceful state.

Social Peace and Harmony: Istighfar is not only a means of individual purification. A person who sees their own faults, feels remorse, and seeks forgiveness becomes more understanding toward the faults of others as well. A society composed of individuals who have made dawn istighfar a way of life becomes a more compassionate, more patient, and more forgiving society. The fact that believers who seek forgiveness at dawn are mentioned in Surah Adh-Dhariyat as a community that has attained Allah's mercy also points to this social dimension.

Recognizing Allah's Blessings: The Reflection of the Morning

Following istighfar at dawn, the believer is invited to reflect upon the blessings that surround them at the very first moment they open their eyes. The Holy Quran expresses this invitation in the following words: "Say: Have you considered — if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts — who is a god other than Allah who could bring them back to you? See how We diversify the signs, yet they still turn away." (Surah Al-An'am, 46)

This verse calls the person to reflect on the value of the most fundamental blessings. Hearing, seeing, reasoning — these have become so habitual, so ordinary, that their existence is often overlooked. Yet each is a reflection of one of Allah's countless attributes of power. The person has made no contribution whatsoever to the existence of these blessings; they are all Allah's gift. A person who upon waking in the morning can still hear, see, and think has in truth once again received these magnificent blessings, newly bestowed upon them through that night.

The Quran's designation of every being and event in the universe as an "ayah" (sign) is deeply meaningful. An ayah encompasses both the divine word in the lines of the Quran and the signs within creation. The brightening of the sky at dawn, the singing of birds, the body's spontaneous breathing — each of these is a sign. For a believer who can see, read, and understand these signs, every morning is in truth a new lesson from the Quran.

Beginning the Day with Sincere Supplication

Istighfar at dawn, followed by reflection upon blessings, naturally prepares the ground for sincere supplication. Supplication is the purest language of need and devotion toward Allah. As a person becomes more aware of the limits of their own strength, they turn ever more toward supplication; and as they supplicate, their nearness to Allah and their reliance upon Him deepens.

The first supplication of the morning gives the entire day an intention and a direction. A day that begins with "Our Lord, guide us to the straight path" starts to take shape around this request. This supplication is not merely words; it is the starting point of a gaze, an attitude, a choice of how to live. The decisions made throughout the day, the relationships built, and the energy expended begin to align with this sincere desire.

Beginning the day with Allah also makes it easier to seek His pleasure throughout the day. A person who opens their heart to Allah in the morning does not allow worldly anxieties to completely engulf their heart by midday. That light of faith kindled at dawn may grow smaller amid the fatigue and noise of the day, but it reaches a state where it can no longer be entirely extinguished.

The Blessing of the Dawn Hour

Dawn istighfar is one of the most beautiful spiritual gifts that Islam offers to human beings. Two Quranic verses sufficiently summarize how profound the effects of these few moments are — both on the individual and social level, and in the hereafter as well. The description of the believer in Aal-e-Imran and the portrait of the people of Paradise in Adh-Dhariyat lay before our eyes just how deep a transformation of character this seemingly simple act actually represents.

Sleep is a small death; morning is a small resurrection. A believer who makes good use of the first moment of this resurrection — with istighfar, with gratitude, and with turning toward Allah — has begun the day not only with their body, but with their entire soul. This person — who notices the blessings surrounding them, reflects upon them, gives their day a purpose through supplication, and feels Allah's nearness in their heart — is on the path to gaining both this world and the next at the same time.

May our Lord not deprive anyone of the bounty of the dawn hours and the purifying grace of istighfar; and may He make us among those servants who are forgiven, with whom He is pleased, and whom He has given glad tidings of His Paradise.

Invocation: The Essence of Humanity's Turning Toward God

Human carries a sense of helplessness at the depths of its existence. This helplessness is the most fundamental reason for turning toward the Creator. Invocation is the purest and most sincere expression of this turning. It is not merely repeating certain formulas or presenting a wish list; invocation is the surrender of a person's entire being to their Lord. The Quran sets forth this truth with remarkable clarity: "Say: 'My Lord would not care for you at all were it not for your invocation. But you have denied the truth, so the punishment will be inevitable.'" (Surah Al-Furqan, 77). This verse summarizes the value and significance of invocation before God in a single sentence: a person's worth stems from turning to God through invocation — not from having their requests fulfilled.

The Definition and Essence of Invocation

Within the framework of the Quran, invocation is defined as "the turning of a servant toward God with their entire being," or "the plea for help made by a human being — a creature of limited and finite capacity — who acknowledges their helplessness before

an unlimited and infinite power." This definition elevates invocation far beyond a simple petition. Invocation is the acknowledgment of absolute helplessness, declared through language, before God. Through this act, a person does not merely ask for something; they also accept who they are, what they are, and what they are in need of.

Invocation is, at the same time, an act of worship. It is not merely a tool one resorts to in times of need, but a path for drawing closer to God and coming to know Him. For this reason, invocation must be performed with the intention of worship. When a person invokes God, they have actively recognized and declared His existence, His power, and His infinite mercy. This declaration forms the very soul of invocation.

Invocation as the Source of Worth

The most critical point that emerges from verse 77 of Surah Al-Furqan is that the worth God grants to a human being is tied not to the acceptance of the invocation, but to the very act of invoking. In other words, a person becomes worthy before God because they invoke; not because their invocation is granted. This distinction is of the utmost importance, for many people view invocation solely as a results-oriented tool, and when they do not receive the expected outcome, they fall into disappointment — or even into a state of resentment toward God.

Yet at the heart of invocation lies the awareness of one's own poverty. By asking everything from God, who is Al-Ghani (the Self-Sufficient), the human being attains their own richness. The key to every kind of wealth — material or spiritual — is to sincerely feel this poverty and to express it before God with genuine honesty. Our worth arises not from what we possess, but from the depth of our understanding of how much we are in need.

The Invocation of Mesengger Yunus: The Summit of Repentance and Transformation

The Quran presents one of the most striking examples that gives concrete form to this profound meaning of invocation through the story of Mesengger Yunus. Yunus, who departed without fulfilling the mission God had entrusted to him, was swallowed by a whale and found himself in layers of darkness. That moment was one in which all exits had closed and helplessness had reached its peak. In that moment, Yunus invoked:

"There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." (Surah Al-Anbiya, 87)

This invocation carries no self-interested motive. It contains no material demand. There is only the acknowledgment of God's infinite power, the acceptance of one's own mistake, and the turning toward God. This is the purest example that describes the soul of invocation: remorse, surrender, and sincere orientation.

The Invocation of the Polytheists: A Transactional Relationship

The Quran places true invocation and false invocation side by side, revealing the profound difference between them. The polytheists turn toward God only in times of

danger; when they feel safe, they forget Him and return to associating partners with Him:

"And when they board a ship, they invoke God, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him." (Surah Al-Ankabut, 65)

This is the portrait of those who use invocation solely as a tool of self-interest. For them, invocation is a commercial transaction: once the danger has passed, the contract is over. But the invocation of the believer is not like this. The believer turns toward God in both hardship and ease, for they know Him and are ever aware of His presence. The following verse from Surah An-Nisa expresses this clearly: "And when you have completed the prayer, remember God standing, sitting, or lying on your sides." (Surah An-Nisa, 103). Invocation is not part of certain moments; it is part of the entirety of life.

Why Is Our Invocation Not Answered?

The complaint "I invoke God but receive no answer" is an inner anguish experienced by many people. This question deserves to be taken seriously and reflected upon carefully. The following are possible reasons for this situation:

1. Not knowing how to ask: Failing to learn how to invoke God according to the Quran weakens the effectiveness of one's invocation.

2. Misunderstanding the meaning of invocation: Viewing invocation merely as a petition through which wishes will be granted means missing its true spirit.

3. Forgetting the worship dimension of invocation: Invocation is not merely asking; it is turning toward God with the intention of worship.

4. Invoking only in difficult moments: Distancing oneself from God during times of ease and turning to Him only in distress undermines the sincerity of the invocation.

5. Invoking based on incorrect knowledge: Invocation performed through information and practices that are not sound in religion distances the person from the true source.

6. Invoking only for worldly matters: Having material desires perpetually in the foreground renders invocation instrumental.

7. Holding a grudge against God: When what is desired does not come to pass, feeling resentment toward God and turning one's back on Him is incompatible with a true understanding of invocation.

8. Misunderstanding the source of worth: Forgetting that one's worth before God comes through the act of invoking and focusing only on outcomes causes one to lose the very essence of invocation.

9. Lack of trust in God: Not believing that God knows what is best for every human being means building invocation upon a foundation of distrust.

10. Departing from surrender and reliance upon God: Invocation performed without a full sense of trust and surrender to God is overshadowed by inner conflict.

Invocation from the Perspectives of Psychology and Health Sciences

Modern research increasingly demonstrates that invocation is not merely a religious practice but also produces tangible effects on human psychology and biology.

Its Effect on Stress and Cortisol: Because invocation provides mental focus and inner calm, it can trigger the body's "relaxation response." As emphasized in the work of Herbert Benson of Harvard University, regular invocation can reduce cortisol — the stress hormone — and positively influence an individual's physiological balance.

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Strength: Individuals who invoke regularly may feel stronger, more resilient, and more in control. This state, referred to in psychology as "self-efficacy," enhances a person's belief in their own capacity to cope with problems.

Contributions to Mental Health: Various studies show that individuals who invoke regularly experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. Invocation can strengthen emotions such as hope, patience, and reliance upon God, thereby increasing psychological resilience.

Indirect Contribution to the Immune System: The reduction of stress and the achievement of spiritual balance can produce indirect yet positive effects on the immune system. The more balanced functioning of immune cells can be associated with the psychological well-being that invocation provides.

Brain Imaging Studies: Research conducted using fMRI technology reveals that during invocation, areas of the brain associated with attention, emotional regulation, and self-awareness — including the prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex, and limbic system — become active. Increases have also been observed in the levels of neurotransmitters associated with happiness, such as serotonin and dopamine.

Sleep Quality: Invocation or contemplation performed before sleeping at night can reduce mental clutter, laying the groundwork for deeper and higher-quality sleep.

Post-Traumatic Growth: Invocation helps individuals assign meaning to the difficulties they experience. This process, referred to in the literature as "post-traumatic growth," enables a person to emerge from hardship stronger. For individuals struggling with chronic illness, invocation offers a spiritual support mechanism capable of transforming the perception of pain and adding meaning to the healing process.

All of these findings reveal that invocation is not a direct treatment tool of modern medicine, but rather a powerful complementary element that supports both mental and physical health.

The Chasm Between Superstition and True Invocation

The most prominent examples of deviation from the true meaning of invocation

manifest themselves in various cultural practices. Acts such as tying cloth to trees, blowing upon water, or turning toward shrines and seeking intercession from those buried within them are the superstitious pursuits of those who have failed to grasp God's infinite power and nearness. These practices corrupt the spirit of invocation, for invocation is directed solely to God — not through intermediaries. The Quran is absolutely clear on this matter: "And mention the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with complete devotion." (Surah Al-Muzzammil, 8). The believer seeks help from no being other than God. Their invocation is a sincere, unmediated supplication directed solely toward God.

The Bridge of Invocation

Invocation is a spiritual bridge through which a human being expresses their faith and surrender to their Lord. This bridge is built not through forms and rituals, but through earnestness and sincerity. Whenever a person builds this bridge from the heart, they perceive God's presence and nearness more deeply and attain a true sense of peace.

The reminder of the final verse of Surah Al-Furqan is this: were it not for your invocation, you would have no worth whatsoever in the sight of God. This is not merely a religious warning; it is the proclamation of a deep truth about human nature, human helplessness, and human need. To invoke God in the right way requires striving to understand the Quran, building one's life upon this understanding, and living every moment in awareness of His presence. The person who invokes does not merely ask for something — they find themselves, and they come to know their Lord.

Rational Marriage and the Qur'anic Understanding of Marriage

Marriage is a deep-rooted institution that has existed in every society and culture throughout human history, yet varies greatly in meaning and function. Defined in some societies as a sacred covenant and in others as a purely social contract, marriage continues to be debated in the modern age. One concept increasingly at the center of these debates is "rational marriage" — a form of union based on practical and economic calculations rather than emotional bonds. Having become widespread particularly in secular Western societies, it has since spread to different geographies through globalization. Islam, on the other hand, approaches marriage from a far deeper and more holistic perspective. In the Holy Qur'an, marriage is defined not merely as a social contract or biological necessity, but as a divine institution in which love, compassion, and spiritual peace are built. Here, we will examine what rational marriage is, how it functions, and what social dynamics sustain it — then offer a comparative assessment alongside the Qur'anic understanding of marriage.

Rational Marriage: Definition and Origins

The concept of "rational marriage" finds its equivalent in Western literature as "pragmatic marriage" or "marriage of convenience." In this form of marriage, individuals come together not out of deep love or emotional attraction, but in accordance with rational calculations such as economic security, social status, legal rights, or shared interests.

The historical roots of rational marriage run very deep. Marriages conducted among noble families in medieval Europe to consolidate land and power, dynastic marriages in the Ottoman court aimed at strengthening political alliances, and arranged marriages in East Asian societies focused on preserving family honor and wealth — all fall into this category. Rational marriage is therefore not a modern invention; however, modernity has granted it a new dimension and a foundation of legitimacy.

The Face of Rational Marriage in Modern Societies

In contemporary modern societies, rational marriage has taken on a different appearance from the past. Based not on feudal order or dynastic interests but on individualization, consumer culture, and secular moral understanding, this form of marriage has developed its own logical framework. Within this framework, several common patterns stand out.

The first is a division of labor based on gender roles: the woman offers the man emotional and aesthetic value as long as she remains young and attractive, while the man provides the woman with economic security. This relational model is built on a balance of mutual interest, and both parties are aware of this balance.

The second is the pursuit of legal and economic security: practical concerns such as inheritance rights, health insurance, visas, and residency permits play a decisive role in directing some couples toward marriage.

The third is the impulse to escape social pressure: particularly in traditional societies, remaining single can create social stigma, which may drive individuals toward marriage even in the absence of a genuine emotional bond.

This picture reveals that at the core of rational marriage, individual calculation takes precedence over emotional connection.

Rational Marriage and a Moral Paradox

Rational marriage brings with it not only sociological but also profound moral debate. The modern secular moral outlook tends to consider legitimate any contract freely entered into by individuals of their own free will. From this perspective, a pragmatic marriage established by two adults with mutual consent appears entirely acceptable.

However, traditional moral systems — especially religious perspectives — evaluate this matter within a different framework. If a marriage is built solely on mutual interest rather than a genuine bond of love and responsibility, what value does this union fundamentally hold?

A marriage certificate can legally legitimize the relationship in the eyes of society, but it cannot fill the void of meaning within the relationship. Going even further, the following question arises: if a marriage lacks genuine love, responsibility, and devotion at its foundation, what distinguishes this union from other transactional relationships?

Some thinkers read this question as evidence that the institution of marriage has

been reduced to a tool of social legitimization. Indeed, according to many religious traditions, sexual relations outside of marriage are morally unacceptable — yet rational marriage appears to cross this boundary through a mere bureaucratic approval mechanism. This situation raises serious questions regarding the sanctity and spiritual depth of marriage.

The Qur'anic Understanding of Marriage: A Spiritual Union

Islam's understanding of marriage diverges fundamentally from the pragmatic perspective discussed above. In the Holy Qur'an, marriage is defined as a divine institution created by Allah, in which He has placed love and compassion between human beings:

> "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (Surah Ar-Rum, 30:21)

Three fundamental concepts define marriage in this verse:

Sakinah (Tranquility and Serenity): The primary purpose of marriage is for individuals to find peace and calm in one another. This peace is not merely material comfort, but an existential sense of security and belonging felt in the depths of the soul. Spouses should be able to feel complete and whole in each other's presence.

Mawaddah (Love): The concept of "mawaddah" used in the Qur'an expresses a love far deeper than fleeting excitement or physical attraction. This love encompasses the sincere devotion, loyalty, and mutual care that spouses feel toward one another.

Rahmah (Compassion): The third foundational pillar of marriage — compassion — is a value that manifests especially during difficult times. It is the feeling that holds spouses together in moments when the initial fervor of love undergoes transformation; it is the maturity of marriage, made concrete in mutual understanding, tolerance, and self-sacrifice.

The Holistic Dimension of Marriage in Islam

Islam treats marriage not merely as a worldly contract, but as a comprehensive responsibility with both worldly and otherworldly dimensions. This understanding has several key aspects.

Spiritual Partnership: In Islam, spouses come together not merely to meet biological or economic needs, but to support one another on the journey toward the hereafter. The responsibilities of spouses toward each other are shaped within this framework of spiritual partnership.

Balance of Rights and Responsibilities: Islamic law has regulated in detail the rights that spouses hold toward each other and the responsibilities they must assume within the institution of marriage. This regulation ensures that the relationship rests not only on an emotional foundation, but on a just and balanced one as well.

Social Foundation: According to Islam, the foundation of a healthy society passes

through healthy families. Marriage is therefore regarded not only as an individual choice, but also as a social responsibility.

A Comparative Assessment

When rational marriage and the Qur'anic understanding of marriage are placed side by side, the fundamental difference between them emerges clearly: their centers of value.

In rational marriage, the center of value is individual interest. The relationship is maintained as long as mutual benefit is provided; when the balance is disrupted, it can easily be terminated. In this understanding of marriage, the spouse can be reduced to an instrument used to achieve an end.

In the Qur'anic understanding of marriage, the center of value is devotion to the other and the effort to build meaning together. The spouse is not an instrument, but a companion in whom peace and compassion are shared. In this understanding, the relationship stands not only as long as interest persists, but as long as the given word and carried responsibility endure.

Another significant difference lies in temporal perspective. Rational marriage is, at its core, focused on the present: What am I gaining now? What is this relationship providing me? The Qur'anic understanding of marriage, by contrast, holds a broad temporal perspective encompassing both this world and the hereafter. The relationship between spouses considers not only worldly interests, but also spiritual maturation and divine approval.

The institution of marriage has throughout history been a mirror of societies. The meaning a society attaches to marriage reflects that society's fundamental values regarding human beings, relationships, and existence. Rational marriage, as a product of modern individualism and secular pragmatism, is the concrete expression of an understanding that reduces relationships to a cost-benefit analysis. While this form of marriage serves certain practical functions, it largely excludes the values — love, compassion, and devotion — that transform marriage into a genuinely meaningful union.

The Qur'anic understanding of marriage, by contrast, rests on an entirely different foundation. The framework set forth in verse 21 of Surah Ar-Rum describes a holistic union in which tranquility, love, and compassion coexist — one that encompasses both worldly and otherworldly responsibility. In this understanding, marriage is more than a contract: it is a covenant; more than a partnership: it is a companionship of souls.

In conclusion, the distance between these two understandings of marriage is not merely a difference in the definition of an institution. It is a profound and fundamental difference in vision — regarding what human beings live for, on what foundation relationships should be built, and how a meaningful life is to be constructed.

The Existential Helplessness of Man and the Turn Toward the Divine in Moments of

Danger

The Anthropology of the Moment of Helplessness

Man is, at the core of his existence, a limited being. This limitation is not merely a biological or physical reality; it is also a profound existential truth. In the face of his body's fragility, the inadequacy of his will, and the merciless passage of time, man often finds himself helpless. It is precisely at this point that the need to take refuge in a being more powerful than oneself arises. This need has manifested itself in every era and every geography of human history, producing numerous religious, philosophical, and psychological reflections.

Yet a critical question emerges here: Is this turning genuine, or merely a temporary reflex? Does man turn to God only in moments of danger, or does this turning transform into a sincere and lasting surrender that spreads across the entirety of his life? The Quran addresses this question with a strikingly vivid image: the ship in the storm, and the man who forgets God once he reaches the shore. This image is not a simple narrative; it functions as a mirror that descends into the depths of man's inner world and brings his contradictory nature to light.

The Quran's Diagnosis: Man in the Storm

Verse 65 of Surah Al-Ankabut states: "When they board a ship, they call upon Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him." Verse 67 of Surah Al-Isra reinforces this theme: "And when adversity touches you at sea, lost are those you call upon except for Him. But when He delivers you to the land, you turn away. And ever is man ungrateful."

The first element that draws attention in these verses is the choice of the ship and sea as metaphors. The sea has, since antiquity, served in humanity's collective unconscious as a symbol of the uncontrollable, of uncertainty, and of death. The ship in the storm represents the moment in which all of man's technological and human accumulated knowledge can be reduced to nothing. No matter how experienced the captain, no matter how skilled the engineer — human hands are rendered helpless before mighty waves and raging winds.

It is precisely in this moment of helplessness that the Quran observes: man turns to God "with sincere devotion." That is, the trust he ordinarily scatters among intermediaries, idols, his own strength, or other sources is suddenly gathered by the fear of death and directed straight toward God. This observation is of the utmost importance. Here, the Quran depicts the disbeliever or the polytheist not merely through his selfishness, but also through the forced emergence of his innate nature. In other words, this person cannot help but turn — in the midst of the storm — toward the very God he ordinarily denies or disregards. He has not made a prior decision to do so; this turning occurs through a deep inner compulsion. Yet the moment he sets foot on the shore, that compulsion vanishes and man reverts to his former self.

A Psychological Phenomenon: Foxhole Atheism

The Quran's observation finds its counterpart in modern psychological literature.

"Foxhole atheism" — a concept referring to atheists on the battlefield who, when confronted with the threat of death, reflexively cry out "God, help me!" — reflects a well-documented phenomenon. Military testimonies gathered during World War II gave rise to an observation frequently cited in discussions of faith: "There are no atheists in foxholes."

This phenomenon is not confined to the context of war. Intense fear, news of death, natural disaster, or severe illness all disable man's ordinary defense mechanisms and bring his suppressed divine orientation to the surface. Psychologists explain this as the subconscious coming into play under extreme stress. The ideological walls constructed by the conscious mind crack under an existential threat, and man, without fully realizing it, returns to his most primal and deepest orientation.

This finding aligns remarkably with the Quran's teaching on fitra — the innate human nature. According to the Quran, every human being is created with the capacity to recognize God and turn toward Him. In Surah Ar-Rum, verse 30, this reality is expressed as follows: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. Adhere to the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created all people." The fitra is not an acquired characteristic; it is a divine inclination inscribed into the very essence of man. Yet this inclination can be obscured by environment, culture, habit, and ideology. The moment of helplessness is the moment this veil becomes thinnest — the moment the fitra makes itself felt most powerfully.

Pragmatic Orientation and the Limits of Sincerity

The most striking point in the Quran's ship metaphor is the forgetting that follows the turning. Man is saved, steps ashore, and continues to live as though that intense orientation toward God never happened. This reveals what such a turning is at its core: a demand for deliverance, a calculation of self-interest, a momentary reflex — not faith, not surrender, not recognition.

In psychology, such behaviors are addressed through the concept of "instrumental religiosity." In instrumental religiosity, religion is a means to an end; it is not a goal in itself but a tool. In this approach, God functions as a kind of "insurance policy" consulted in difficult times. Once the difficulty passes, man files the policy away in a drawer and returns to his daily life.

The Quran does not accept this understanding. It emphasizes that a turning which occurs only in moments of danger is not the same as genuine faith and surrender. For true faith is grounded not in a relationship of self-interest, but in a relationship of recognition and love. The person who recognizes God and loves Him turns toward Him not only when he is in need, but in every moment. For to turn toward God is not merely to satisfy a need; it is to live a truth.

The Problem of Intermediaries: Who Stands Between God and Man?

One of the Quran's observations regarding the polytheists is that, despite believing in God, they do not turn toward Him directly. In Surah Az-Zumar, verse 3, the polytheists speak thus: "We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allah." This

reflects a most interesting psychological structure.

These people — who acknowledge God's existence and even know that He is the Creator — believe they need intermediaries to reach Him. These intermediaries may be idols, deities, saints, religious authorities, legal scholars, scholars of hadith, or other centers of power. This understanding stems from a deep-rooted crisis of trust. Man does not fully believe that God will intervene on his behalf directly, or that God directly hears him; and so he resorts to intermediaries.

Yet the Quran rejects this mediation. In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 186, it is stated: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me — indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." There is no need for any intermediary to enter between God and His servant; on the contrary, these intermediaries weaken man's trust in God.

This issue transcends historical context. Even today, certain mindsets assume that God's revelation alone is not sufficient — that religious understanding must necessarily be completed through additional interpretations, commentaries, hadiths, legal schools, intermediary authorities, or social consensus. This approach is, at its core, a reflection of distrust in the Quran's capacity to speak directly to every era and every mind. Though the polytheist's idol and the modern mind's authority take different forms, both rest on the same foundation: an avoidance of surrendering directly to God.

True Surrender: In Abundance as in Hardship

The understanding of faith the Quran proposes is not a relationship confined solely to moments of danger. In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 165, it is stated: "Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah." This powerful love is not conditional. It requires man to maintain the same orientation in abundance and in hardship, aboard the ship and on the shore, in health and in sickness.

This is not a conceptual difference; it is an existential one. He who turns to God to escape danger is, in truth, seeking deliverance — he already envisions rescue as something independent of God. The true believer, however, leaves even deliverance to God. For him, the matter is not "salvation," but "the pleasure of God." And so the true believer's prayer rises with the same sincerity not only when the storm has passed, but also when the storm is raging, and also when the sea is calm and still.

The Anatomy of Denial: Not by Nature, but by Veiling One's Nature

The Quran does not define the disbeliever as a being who is faithless from birth. Rather, it describes him as a being who veils the divine orientation inherent in his nature. The scene of "alastu birabbikum" ("Am I not your Lord?") recounted in Surah Al-A'raf, verse 172, is profoundly meaningful in this regard: God took the offspring of the children of Adam from their backs, asked, "Am I not your Lord?", and they replied, "Yes, we bear witness." This is the expression of an ontological testimony. Every human being carries, in the depths of his soul, the potential to recognize God. Denial is not the destruction of this potential; it is its concealment.

Culture, habit, pride, worldly attachments, and ideological walls settle over man's fitra. But this veil is never complete. The moment of the storm is the moment when this veil becomes thinnest. This is why the Quran reads the disbeliever's turning in the storm not as a contradiction, but as the rebellion of the fitra.

This picture contains no dogmatic condemnation of the disbeliever; on the contrary, it carries a profound compassion toward him. The Quran says that man never loses his capacity to turn toward God. This capacity preserves itself, even in the deepest moments of suppression, as a spark. The problem is that this spark is ignited only in moments of crisis. True faith, however, is to keep this spark continuously alive — not to let it be extinguished — and to build a life in its warmth.

Conclusion

The Quran's ship metaphor is not a historical anecdote. It is the symbolic expression of a universal spiritual portrait of humanity. Every human being experiences that ship in some form: an illness over which he has lost control, an unsolvable problem, an unexpected loss, or the news of death knocking at the door. These are the moments that confront man with the limits of his own power and activate his innate inclination to turn toward God.

The Quran does not diminish this turning; on the contrary, it acknowledges it as the voice of the fitra. Yet it also makes clear: to abandon this turning once the danger has passed is equivalent to never having experienced it at all.

True faith is not a sail adjusted to the weather, but a compass that points in the same direction under all conditions. To remember God only "until one boards the ship again" is to use Him as a tool. But the faith to which the Quran invites is the faith of a heart that embraces God as the goal itself — a heart that turns toward Him in every breath, trusts Him at every step, and surrenders to Him in every moment, whether on land or at sea, in abundance or in hardship, in health or in sickness.

This is the heart the Quran praises: a heart that turns toward Him with the same sincerity before the storm, while still at sea, and long after reaching the shore.

Raising Children from an Islamic Perspective: The Power of Love, Responsibility, and Being an Example

Children are the most precious beings in human life. Bringing them into the world and raising them is not merely a biological process; it is a profound spiritual responsibility and a great blessing. The Holy Quran expresses this truth as follows: "And know that your wealth and your children are a trial, and that with Allah is a great reward." (Al-Anfal, 28). This verse reminds us that children are a transient element of worldly life, yet at the same time they are a divine test that opens the door to great rewards in the hereafter. Therefore, raising a child means not only making them successful and happy in this world, but preparing them for the afterlife and nurturing them as individuals aligned with Allah's pleasure.

A Spiritual Responsibility, Not a Material One

In today's world, parenthood is often equated with meeting a child's material needs — a good school, healthy nutrition, a safe home. These are certainly necessary. However, Islam's understanding of child-rearing goes far beyond these necessities. Instilling moral values in a child, nourishing them spiritually, and strengthening their bond with Allah are counted among a parent's most fundamental duties.

Many parents, while focusing on worldly life, leave their responsibilities toward the hereafter in the background. Yet raising a child who is devoted to Allah, walks the right path, and possesses good character is a tremendous gain for the parent — both in this world and the next. From this perspective, a child is not merely an entrusted gift, but also an eternal investment.

Examples from the Prophets: Worship as a Bridge Between Generations

Islamic history is full of powerful examples of how worship and love can coexist in the parent-child relationship. When Prophet Ibrahim built the Kaaba together with his son Ismail, he was not merely constructing a physical structure — he was sharing a religious act of worship with his son. That great supplication summarizes the spirit of their togetherness: "Our Lord, accept this from us. Indeed, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (Al-Baqarah, 127). This scene is a timeless model showing how parent and child can act together in the realm of worship.

Prophet Muhammad is also an unparalleled example when it comes to the love and respect shown to children. The tenderness he showed his grandchildren, the moments he brought them to the mosque and spent time with them — all reveal that religion is lived not merely in words, but in the warmth of relationships. This attitude of the Prophet clearly demonstrates that a respectful and affectionate approach toward children is at the very core of Islam.

A Love-Based Method in Religious Education

The Quran declares, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Al-Baqarah, 256), clearly establishing that an approach of pressure and obligation in religious education is wrong. A parent who takes this principle seriously introduces religious values to their child not through fear, but through love, curiosity, and beauty.

What does this mean in practice? First and foremost, the parent's own life stands like a mirror before the child. Children model their parents' behavior far more than their words. A parent who never lies — rather than one who merely says "lying is wrong" — is the one who truly plants honesty in a child's heart. Moral and religious values are not read from books of advice, but from the pages of lived life.

Additionally, using language appropriate to the child's developmental stage is of great importance. Instead of abstract religious concepts, concrete examples that the child can understand should be used. The magnificent colors of the sky, the perfect structure of a flower, or the way rain brings the earth to life are all highly effective examples from nature for explaining Allah's existence and love. In this way, the child begins to know Allah not as a source of fear, but as the Creator of all beauty.

Respecting the Curious Child

Children are naturally curious. Taking their questions seriously rather than dismissing them both strengthens their self-confidence and creates an environment of trust-based communication within the family. The phrase "That's a wonderful question — let's explore it together" is not merely an answer; it is also an expression of value given to the child. Not knowing the answer is nothing to be ashamed of — on the contrary, it is a doorway to learning together.

Islam encourages giving children a voice in communication, seeking their opinions, and receiving those opinions with respect. Dismissing children's views with the attitude of "they don't understand yet" hinders both their emotional and intellectual development. Conversely, a parent who listens to and takes their child seriously raises individuals who are self-confident, emotionally healthy, and socially mature.

Presenting Acts of Worship as Beauty, Not Obligation

Teaching a child acts of worship is a very different process from forcing them to pray under pressure. The Quran emphasizes that prayer should be performed at its proper time and in a measured manner (An-Nisa, 103), indicating that worship must be carried out within a discipline, yet from the heart. Children should be taught acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and supplication gradually and within the natural flow of life.

A child who sits beside a praying parent — who feels the peace of that moment even if they do not yet fully grasp the meaning of prostration — will gradually make that act of worship their own. What is critical here is that worship be presented not as punishment, but as the joy of drawing closer to Allah. Hope and beauty must take precedence over intimidation and threats.

The truth that Allah's mercy encompasses all things (Al-A'raf, 156) must always be central when introducing the child to Allah. The hope of paradise before the fear of hell, the infinity of mercy before narratives of punishment — these are what the child must feel first. A child whose heart is filled with love for Allah and an awareness of His mercy will fulfill their acts of worship not out of fear, but out of an inner sense of beauty.

Teaching Core Values Through Practical Life

In the Quran, values such as truthfulness, patience, respect for parents, and sharing are not presented merely as theoretical principles — they are laid out as a morality to be lived. The most effective way to convey these values to a child is to connect them with concrete life examples.

Keeping one's word, apologizing when one makes a mistake, sharing with those in need, and putting oneself in another's shoes are the most fundamental building blocks of religious education. Instead of telling a child "be patient," accompanying them through a moment of impatience and experiencing patience together leaves a far more lasting impression. Religion is not merely knowledge that is taught; it is a way of life that is lived and shared.

Using Modern Tools: Opportunity or Threat?

Today's children are deeply influenced by visual and digital content. Rather than ignoring this reality, it is possible to enrich religious education with these tools. Animations telling the stories of the Prophets, interactive applications designed for Quran education, or meaningful visits to Islamic historical sites all support a child in both learning and loving religious values.

However, balance is indispensable here. Screens should serve only as a supportive tool in religious education. The truly lasting and deep education takes place through the warmth of the family, the exemplary life of the parent, and the sincere relationship built with the child.

Reward and Motivation: Maintaining the Balance

To help a child see acts of worship not as an obligation but as beauty, love, and meaning, motivational approaches may sometimes be adopted. Telling a child who has memorized a surah or learned to pray, "Well done — you've learned beautifully what Allah has taught you; let's go to the park together" both motivates the child and frames this beautiful experience as one of Allah's blessings.

That said, it is important to avoid creating the impression that every act of worship is tied to a material reward. The ultimate goal is to ensure the child performs acts of worship not only for a reward, but with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure (rida). A sincere intention carries a value beyond any reward.

The Most Lasting Education Is Lived Through Love

Raising children from an Islamic perspective accepts neither an excessively authoritarian understanding nor an indifference disconnected from religious values. The right balance is established through a love-based, exemplary parenthood that centers on Allah's love, mercy, and justice.

Children come into this world as a trust from Allah. Preparing them not only for this world but for the hereafter is the responsibility of parents. This responsibility is fulfilled in the most beautiful way not through words, but through a lived exemplary life, a consistent moral character, and sincere love. Because the deepest mark is the one left by love flowing from heart to heart.

All of a parent's effort is, in truth, a means within a process ordained by Allah. It is Allah alone who grants guidance; the parent is merely an instrument bearing witness to the unfolding of that guidance.

Faith, Islam, and Being Muslim: From Word to Action, From Individual to Society

Throughout human history, many belief systems have aimed to offer humanity meaning and direction. Islam stands out among these systems not merely as a body of beliefs, but as a comprehensive way of life. Yet reaching the essence of this teaching is not possible by simply saying "I am a Muslim." For faith to truly exist, it must take root in the heart, permeate one's thoughts, and transform into actions. Indeed, the Quran makes this reality explicit: "Do people think they will be left alone after saying 'We believe' without being tested? We certainly tested those before them

— and Allah will clearly distinguish those who are truthful from those who are liars." (Al-Ankabut, 2–3). These verses emphasize that faith is not merely a claim, but a reality that is tested at every moment of life and must be proven. Here, we will explore how the concept of faith cannot be reduced to a linguistic expression; we will examine the profound differences between the concepts of Muslim, Believer (Mu'min), and Islamist; and we will evaluate Islam's comprehensive structure, which extends from individual belief to a societal order.

The Anatomy of Faith: Language, Heart, and Body

Faith gains meaning through the wholeness of three fundamental dimensions: language, heart, and body. A structure in which these three elements are disconnected from one another, or in which only one is active, cannot constitute genuine faith.

Language is the outward expression of faith. Yet language is only the door to faith — not the house itself. Throughout history, many people have verbally professed faith while their hearts and bodies have remained distant from that profession. This is where the second dimension of faith comes in: the heart. The heart is the center and origin of faith. As the Quran repeatedly emphasizes, faith bears no meaning unless it is firmly rooted in the heart. Faith in the heart shapes how a person perceives the world, their values, their fears, and their hopes. A deep sense of submission to God influences even a person's everyday decisions, providing them with an inner compass. For this reason, a faith based solely on words, if it finds no echo in the heart, cannot go beyond an empty ritual.

The body is the concrete domain of faith. A person's hands, feet, eyes, and tongue become instruments through which belief is reflected onto the world. A person demonstrates their faith through bodily actions: they help others, act with integrity, object to injustice, and refuse to yield to oppression. The body is the visible evidence of the belief held in the heart. Therefore, confining faith to a purely mental or verbal space is a betrayal of its very essence.

The Mindset of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) and the Imprisonment of Faith in Conscience

An important concept must be addressed here: the mindset of jahiliyyah (ignorance). This concept is not limited to the pre-Islamic period; it refers to a form of consciousness that reproduces itself anew in every age. The person of jahiliyyah imprisons religion within their inner world. They view faith as a matter of conscience — even as a private affair. They say, "I am a believer; this is in my heart," yet feel no sense of responsibility for allowing that belief to be reflected in their life, their relationships, and society.

This understanding is extremely common and extremely misleading. For the Quran has never defined faith merely as an individual feeling or a mental acceptance. Faith carries a social dimension; it necessitates the actualization of values such as justice, compassion, honesty, and responsibility. A person who merely feels religion in their heart while failing to fulfill its requirements in social life cannot be said to be fully living their faith.

At this point, one must ask: Where does the imprisonment of faith within conscience come from? It stems largely from ignorance — from a lack of adequate familiarity with the Quran. A Muslim identity obtained without learning, understanding, or connecting the Quran to life is like a structure without a foundation. Such a person has accepted Islam only as a doctrine, yet has been unable to transform it into a way of life.

Muslim: The Individual at the Beginning of the Path

The term Muslim comes from the Arabic meaning "one who submits." When a person becomes a Muslim, they have acknowledged the oneness of God and begun to build their life upon this belief. However, this is not a destination — it is a beginning. The Muslim is an individual in the early stages of the journey. They have begun learning the Quran, accepted the Quran as sufficient, acknowledged the principles of Islam, and are striving to fulfill their acts of worship. Yet these efforts do not indicate that faith has fully deepened. The Muslim is in a state of striving; they have not yet fully tasted the fruits of that striving.

A critical point must be emphasized here: the pillars of Islam are not, as is sometimes believed, merely five in number. These five pillars are based on a hadith and took shape during the period of Muawiyah. In the true sense, the pillars of Islam are the entirety of the Quran. Every verse, every ruling, and every principle of the Quran is a guide to life for a Muslim. Therefore, saying "I have fulfilled the five pillars; I am a Muslim" is not sufficient. To be a Muslim means to confront the Quran in its entirety, to regard it as sufficient, and to live by it.

In the course of this long journey, the Muslim can gradually attain a deeper understanding. As they grasp the wisdom of the Quran, their faith grows stronger; life begins to take shape around this faith. This is a gradual and patient process of transformation.

Mu'min (Believer): The Individual Who Deepens Faith

The term Mu'min derives from the verb meaning "to believe" and expresses a faith deeper than that of a Muslim. The Mu'min does not merely accept their belief — they internalize it, reflect it upon every moment of their life, and live their submission to God as a conscious choice.

The Mu'min does not merely read the Quran; they contemplate its depths. They seek the relevance of each verse within their own life. They transcend worldly calculations and, in every action, seek the pleasure of God. This is not ordinary religiosity — it is an existential integration. For the Mu'min, Islam has ceased to be an identity card and has become a reality as natural and essential as breathing.

The Mu'min also feels a responsibility toward society. They embrace the service of humanity, standing against oppression, and spreading the universal message of Islam as a duty. They care not only about their own salvation, but also about the guidance of those around them. This social dimension is an important characteristic that distinguishes the Mu'min from the Muslim.

To be a Mu'min is also to willingly face trials. Surah Al-Ankabut of the Quran presents this reality with striking clarity: a claim of faith is not accepted without being tested. God tests His servants through hardships, losses, solitude, and choices. The Mu'min does not meet these trials with complaint, but with patience, trust in God (tawakkul), and conscious submission.

Islamist: The Individual Striving to Transform Society

The concept of "Islamist" goes beyond individual belief to take on a social and political dimension. The Islamist embraces Islam not merely as a system of individual belief and worship, but as a comprehensive system that organizes social, cultural, economic, and political life.

At the foundation of Islamism lies the following idea: Islam is not a religion practiced only in the mosque. It contains principles that guide every domain, from understanding of justice to economic relations, from the structure of the state to the institution of the family. Accordingly, the Islamist aims to transform the structure of society in accordance with these principles.

In this context, figures such as Said Nursi and Necmettin Erbakan offer important examples. Said Nursi sought to reconcile Islam with the modern world's understanding of reason and science, while Necmettin Erbakan advocated that Islamic principles should be carried into the political and economic spheres, developing concrete political projects in this direction. Both figures transcended individual faith, adopted an understanding of social responsibility, and strove to institutionalize Islam as a way of life.

The Unity and Permeability of the Three Concepts

The concepts of Muslim, Mu'min, and Islamist are not opposites of one another, but complementary and traversable stages. Every Muslim is on a journey toward becoming a Mu'min over time. Every Mu'min, bearing a responsibility toward their surrounding society, also carries to some degree an Islamist perspective within themselves.

It can be summarized as follows:

- The Muslim is one who accepts submission.

- The Mu'min is one who internalizes that submission.

- The Islamist is one who strives to transform that submission into a project of societal change.

This tripartite structure demonstrates that Islam is not merely a religion of individual salvation, but a universal teaching that contributes to human civilization.

Faith Is Verified Not in Words, but in Life

True faith gains meaning when language, heart, and body are harmoniously oriented toward God. Saying "Alhamdulillah, I am a Muslim" is only the very beginning of this

journey. As faith takes root in a person's heart, it begins to shape their thoughts and actions, and in time is reflected in the individual's character, relationships, and society.

The greatest trap of the jahiliyyah mindset is imprisoning faith within conscience. Yet the Quran demands that faith be made visible in every domain of life. To truly live Islam is possible only through knowledge, awareness, sincerity, and action.

To be a Muslim is a beginning. To be a Mu'min is to deepen that beginning. To be an Islamist is to carry individual belief into social responsibility. The individual who bears all three dimensions together has fulfilled their debt to themselves, to humanity, and to God at the highest possible level.

Ultimately, every individual must find this truth within their own inner journey — and submit to God wholly, through heart, tongue, and body. For faith is not merely a truth that is spoken, but one that is lived and proven.

Magic and Sorcery: A Modern Perspective from Psychological Suggestion to Social Manipulation

Magic and sorcery are phenomena that have left deep marks throughout human history, interpreted differently across cultures at both individual and societal levels. This deep-rooted belief system, stretching from ancient civilizations to the present day, has emerged over centuries as humanity's attempt to make sense of unexplainable events. So does magic and sorcery actually exist? Viewed through the lens of modern science and psychology, the answer is far more complex and multilayered than we might expect.

Today, the concepts of magic and sorcery are no longer confined to mystical rituals and supernatural forces — they extend into a much broader universe of meaning. Psychological suggestion, media manipulation, social engineering, and the information bombardment of the digital age have effectively become the new sorcery practices of the modern world. Here, we will examine magic and sorcery from the perspective of both individual psychology and social dynamics, comprehensively exploring their reflections in the modern world and how individuals can cope with their effects.

The Psychological Foundations of Magic: How Does the Mind Shape the Body?

To understand the power of magic and sorcery, we must first grasp how the human mind works. The human brain is highly sensitive to stimuli from the outside world. Social interactions, cultural beliefs, and psychological suggestions largely determine an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. From this perspective, beliefs about magic are a direct product of suggestion processes shaped within the individual's mind.

Psychologists have long demonstrated that mental beliefs can produce very concrete effects at the physical level. Symptoms such as headaches, nausea, chronic fatigue, or mood disorders can sometimes be a reflection of unconscious suggestions a person directs toward themselves. When someone sincerely believes

they have been subjected to magic, this belief can lay the groundwork for depression, physical weakness, and various bodily ailments. Even without any supernatural force, the belief produced by the mind brings about real and measurable changes in the body. This phenomenon can aptly be called "psychological magic" in the literature.

The most well-known example of this phenomenon is the placebo and nocebo effect, frequently observed in medicine. In the placebo effect, a patient who believes that a medication with no therapeutic content will work actually shows genuine signs of recovery. In the nocebo effect, the opposite occurs — when a person believes they will be harmed, this belief can lead to physiological disturbances. The effects that belief in magic produces in the body largely overlap with this nocebo mechanism.

The Cycle of Fear, Anxiety, and Magical Belief

In many cultures, the powerful emotion underlying belief in magic is fear. People fall into deep anxiety when faced with events they cannot control or explain. This anxiety feeds and reinforces beliefs about magic. Convinced that a malicious person can harm them, the individual begins to weaken physically and psychologically. Over time, this weakness is interpreted as proof that the spell has "worked," and the belief enters a self-sustaining cycle.

Anxiety disorders significantly amplify this cycle. Individuals who live in a constant state of perceived threat face a process called somatic somatization — the externalization of emotional and psychological stress through physical symptoms such as abdominal pain, trembling, and dizziness. The brain produces the same biochemical responses regardless of whether the perceived threat is real or imagined. Stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline come into play; the immune system weakens, digestion is disrupted, and mental clarity gives way to fog. All of this produces results that are tangible and concrete, even in the eyes of a physician who does not believe in magic.

Hypnotherapy and the Limits of Suggestion

One of the fields that most helps us understand the relationship between magic and suggestion is the therapeutic use of hypnosis. Hypnotherapists can consciously direct the individual's mind to produce significant changes in physical symptoms. Hypnotherapy — effective across a wide spectrum from pain management to overcoming phobias, processing trauma, and changing habits — is one of the most striking demonstrations of mind-body unity. This represents a critical point for those who question the "reality" of magic: without any supernatural force, through mental direction alone, bodily reality can be transformed.

The Sorcerers of the Modern World: Media, Politics, and Social Manipulation

Magic is not solely a psychological process experienced at the individual level. Viewed from a broader perspective, the systematic manipulations applied in society can be evaluated as a form of magic in the fullest sense. Media, politics, fashion, and consumer culture have become enormously powerful tools that direct society, consciously or unconsciously. These tools target not people's decisions, but largely

their subconscious beliefs.

Television, advertising, social media algorithms, and the popular culture industry continuously and systematically dictate to individuals how they should think, what they should wear, what they should desire, and what they should reject. These messages are generally not presented on an open, rational discussion platform; instead, they are imprinted on minds through emotional bonding, repetition, and subconscious associations. The result is not an objective choice, but the illusion of a "free will" framed from the outside.

Cognitive Distortion and the Power of Media

The brain's mechanism known as "cognitive distortion" explains the basic workings of this process. Individuals who encounter a belief or viewpoint frequently and intensely enough gradually begin to adopt it as reality without question. The design of social media platforms is built precisely to exploit this mechanism. The content the algorithm recommends to users tends to be selected to reinforce their existing beliefs, creating "echo chambers" or "filter bubbles." As people lose the opportunity to encounter different viewpoints, they begin to believe ever more strongly that their own worldview is the one and universal truth. This process is structurally no different from a traditional sorcerer guiding a target through suggestion. The difference is that the sorcerer is no longer a single individual — their role has been taken over by algorithms processing the data of millions of users, enormous advertising budgets, and professional perception management specialists.

Politics, Mass Psychology, and Social Sorcery

The history of politics is full of examples in which mass psychology has been skillfully employed. Powerful rhetoric, emotional symbols, identity narratives built around "the other," and discourse construction based on repetition are ancient tools for pulling individuals out of rational deliberation and into a shared emotional world. These tools rely on collective suggestion rather than conscious choice, and in this respect, they overlap remarkably with traditional magical practices.

Consumer culture must also be considered in this context. Gilded billboards, the influencer economy, and the constant renewal cycle created by the fashion industry lead individuals to tie their sense of self to a product, brand, or status symbol. When a person wears a particular perfume or a certain brand of clothing, they begin to feel more valuable, more successful, or more loved. This feeling is nourished not by the object itself, but by the cultural meaning codes attributed to it. In other words, marketers have instilled a belief system in the individual's mind that is planted as if it were real — and this is pure, classical magical suggestion.

Resistance and Liberation: Conscious Awareness and Psychological Empowerment

It is possible to stand against these magical influences operating at both the social and individual level, but this is not a spontaneous process. Conscious awareness, critical thinking, and inner strength are required to resist external manipulation.

Mindfulness — the practice of experiencing the present moment fully and without

judgment — is central here. The essence of this practice is for the individual to question, the moment they catch themselves in thoughts related to magic or psychological manipulation, how realistic those thoughts actually are. Research shows that regular mindfulness practice significantly reduces anxiety, softens stress responses, and helps individuals develop a more solid internal reference point against external influences.

Additionally, critical media literacy is one of the most fundamental tools for protection against the magic of the modern world. Questioning who finances a news source, noticing which emotional buttons an advertisement is pressing, or recognizing what kind of perception a social media post is trying to construct transforms individuals from passive recipients into active, questioning subjects.

The Treatment Process: Psychological Management of Magical Influences

For individuals who believe they have been exposed to magic or psychological manipulation, the treatment process requires a multilayered approach. The ultimate goal of this process is to rebalance the individual's mental and physical health and make them psychologically resilient against external influences.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) stands out as one of the most effective methods for treating the effects of magic and psychological manipulation. CBT's core function is to help the individual recognize negative thought patterns, question them, and replace them with healthier alternatives. The process consists of three basic stages. In the first stage, the individual clearly articulates their beliefs about magic and sorcery and evaluates the logical bases of these beliefs. In the second stage, false or distorted thoughts are restructured with realistic, evidence-based thinking. In the third stage, behavioral strategies are developed to carry these healthy ways of thinking into daily life. For example, an individual who believes they have been bewitched learns to attribute a headache not to a supernatural influence but to somatic stress responses — and this reframing facilitates the gradual alleviation of symptoms over time.

Hypnotherapy and EMDR

Hypnotherapy is an extremely powerful tool for accessing the individual's subconscious and transforming negative beliefs and suggestions. A person who believes they have been victimized by magic or external manipulation can, in a hypnotic process, discover the origin of this belief and reground the mind on a healthy foundation. EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) focuses particularly on resolving the traces left on the body and mind by traumatic experiences and false beliefs. In cases where the fears and anxieties associated with magic are linked to past traumatic experiences, EMDR can provide significant improvement.

Social Support and Community

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to magic or psychological

manipulation often feel a profound sense of loneliness and isolation. At this point, social support becomes an integral part of the treatment process. Support groups composed of people with similar experiences both allow individuals to realize they are not alone and provide a foundation for sharing practical coping strategies. When family and close circles adopt an understanding, unbiased, and well-informed attitude, the healing process is significantly accelerated.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Therapeutic Tools

The integration of technology into the treatment process has become a rapidly developing field in recent years. AI-powered digital therapy applications can continuously and in a personalized manner monitor individuals' mental states. These applications can identify false beliefs based on the thoughts and emotional patterns the user expresses, suggest alternative cognitive frameworks, and visually concretize the individual's progress through the therapeutic process.

Emotional analysis technologies can extract important clues about an individual's psychological state from tone of voice and written communication. AI systems that make use of this data offer valuable support to clinicians in developing intervention strategies tailored to each individual. Ultimately, AI emerges as a powerful tool that — combined with big data analysis — enhances the effectiveness of individual therapies, broadens accessibility, and makes treatment a more dynamic process.

The True Face of Magic

Magic and sorcery are not mythological fantasies based on supernatural forces — yet to say they "don't exist" is also misleading. For these phenomena produce extremely concrete and measurable effects in the workings of the human mind and social structures. The reality of magic lies not in a supernatural realm, but in the deep imprints left on the mind by psychological suggestion, cultural beliefs, and social manipulation.

The sorcerers of the modern world no longer work with incense and talismans; they operate through algorithms, advertising strategies, and political discourse. The way to break free from these sorcerers' spells is the same today as it was in ancient times: to seek truth, to be the master of one's own mind, and to question beliefs imposed from the outside. Conscious awareness, critical thinking, psychological support, and access to accurate information remain the most solid shield protecting individuals from both personal suggestion and social manipulation.

Rather than asking whether magic truly exists, perhaps a more productive question is this: Is my mind truly under my own control — or in the hands of a sorcerer I cannot see?

Slavery and Captivity in Islam: A Conceptual Analysis

Slavery is one of the darkest practices in human history, having existed across many civilizations. Islam's relationship with this issue has been misunderstood, with verses presented out of context and interpreted in ways far removed from historical reality. To properly understand Islam's approach to slavery, one must first grasp the

semantic depth of the words used in the Quran, and then understand the historical and social context in which these words appear.

The Semantic Framework of Key Concepts

The majority of verses cited as evidence that Islam endorses slavery actually stem from mistranslations of Arabic words. For this reason, examining the relevant terms etymologically is essential to a correct understanding of the issue.

The word abd (عبد) shares the same root as the word for worship (*ibada*) and carries the meaning of "to serve, to be in devotion." In classical Arabic, this word was also used to describe free individuals; its identification with slavery is a reflection of later periods. The words ibad (عباد) and ama (أمة) refer to male and female servants respectively, but these terms were likewise used for free individuals.

The words that genuinely point to slavery are rakabe (رقبة) and er-rikab (الرّقاب). While rakabe is used in the sense of ownership or possession of property,er-rikab refers to a person under the yoke of bondage. The purpose of both words in the Quran is not to legitimize slavery, but on the contrary, to encourage liberation from captivity.

The word asir (أسر) corresponds to an entirely different concept from slavery. This term, referring to persons captured in war, is framed within the Quran as requiring their release — either for ransom or freely. Therefore, captivity and slavery must be treated as two distinct institutions within Islamic law.

The Quran's Approach to Slavery: Abolition, Not Legitimization

The weakest point of the claim that Islam legitimizes slavery becomes apparent when one looks at the entirety of the relevant verses in the Quran. All of these verses, rather than endorsing slavery, outline a roadmap aimed at gradually eliminating it.

Surah An-Nisa, verse 92 prescribes tahriru rakabe — the freeing of a neck — as expiation for unintentional killing. Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 89 imposes the same obligation as expiation for breaking an oath. Surah Al-Mujadila, verse 3 criticizes the zihar practice inherited from the Age of Ignorance (jahiliyya) and again prescribes the freeing of a captive as the means of rectifying that wrong:

> "And those who pronounce zihar from their wives, then go back on what they said — then there must be the freeing of a slave before they touch one another." (Surah Al-Mujadila, 3)

Surah Al-Baqara, verse 177, in defining righteousness and piety, counts assistance to those under the yoke as an inseparable part of that definition:

> "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but righteousness is in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask, and for freeing slaves; and who establishes prayer and gives zakah; those who fulfill their promise when they promise; and those who are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been

true, and it is those who are the righteous." (Surah Al-Baqara, 177)

Surah At-Tawbah, verse 60 mentions fi'r-rikab among the designated recipients of zakat and charity, establishing as a constitutional principle that societal wealth — including state resources — must be allocated toward freeing those in bondage:

> "Charity expenditures are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed to collect it, and for bringing hearts together, and for freeing captives, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the stranded traveler — an obligation imposed by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise." (Surah At-Tawbah, 60)

What is striking in all of these verses is this: the Quran, each time, points not to a path that perpetuates captivity, but to an exit door that breaks it. This consistency is not coincidental; it is the reflection of a deliberate strategy of emancipation.

The Contradiction Between Tawhid and Slavery

The doctrine of tawhid — the oneness of God, which forms the religious foundation of Islam — makes clear that servitude belongs to Allah alone, and that submission to any other being is not legitimate. This principle transforms slavery from a merely legal matter into a theological impossibility.

Surah Ali 'Imran, verse 79 states this reality directly:

> "It is not for a human that Allah should give him the Scripture and authority and prophethood and then he would say to the people, 'Be servants to me rather than Allah,' but rather, 'Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Scripture and because of what you have studied.'"

No prophet has ever told people to serve him, because binding a human being to another human being directly contradicts the oneness of Allah. Surah Al-Fatiha, verse 5 — "You alone we serve and You alone we ask for help" — declares that devotion belongs solely to Allah, and that any submission beyond this wounds human dignity.

Surah An-Nahl, verse 75 and Surah Az-Zumar, verse 29 reinforce this message through allegorical narratives:

> "Allah presents an example: a slave owned by someone, with no power over anything, and one whom We have provided from Us a good provision, and he spends from it secretly and publicly. Can they be equal? Praise be to Allah! But most of them do not know." (Surah An-Nahl, 75)

> "Allah presents an example of a man owned by partners in disagreement, and another belonging entirely to one man — are the two equal in comparison? Praise be to Allah! But most of them do not know." (Surah Az-Zumar, 29)

The emphasis is that the one under another's yoke and the one bound solely to Allah cannot be considered equal. The conclusion indicated by this comparison is clear: a human being attains true freedom only by being bound to Allah; every form of human bondage runs contrary to this freedom.

The Question of Women in the Quran and the Transformation of the Concept of "Jariya"

The claim that Islam legitimizes the enslavement of women is largely rooted in a misunderstanding of the word jariya. However, the Arabic word جَارِيَة (cāriya) is derived from the root j-r-y, whose original meaning is "flowing, walking, moving." This root originally referred to a "young girl" or "moving woman" in a neutral sense, expressing a free identity.

The semantic shift of the term occurred after the passing of Prophet Muhammad. As the institution of slavery became widespread in social practice, jariya transformed from a term describing a free woman into one denoting a captive or enslaved woman. The influence of Roman law also played a decisive role in this transformation. In Rome, the term concubina was used to describe a woman in an extramarital relationship who was not accorded the legal status of a wife. This understanding infiltrated the Arabic language and some Islamic sources during the period when the Islamic world came into contact with Roman culture; the word jariya was, over time, shifted in meaning to "sex slave" under this cultural contamination.

A critical fact must be noted here: the word jariya does not appear anywhere in the Quran. In many translations, the expression mā malakat aymānukum is rendered as "your slave-women" or "your female slaves"; however, the word-for-word translation of the phrase is "those whom your right hands possess." In a holistic reading of the Quran, this expression defines a legitimate union established through a marriage contract and the nikah covenant — not the institution of slavery.

Surah An-Nur, verse 32 is a fine example that clearly illustrates the distinction:

> "And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male servants and female servants. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing." (Surah An-Nur, 32)

Male and female servants — rendered by the words ibad and ima — are encouraged to marry. This encouragement aims at their integration into society as equal individuals and the recognition of their right to establish a family; not at the perpetuation of a slavery institution.

Islam's Strategy of Gradual Emancipation

The fact that Islam did not prohibit slavery suddenly and directly is sometimes interpreted as the religion turning a blind eye to it. Yet this gradual approach is the product of a profound social, psychological, and legal calculation.

Evaluated from a social dimension: in seventh-century Arabia, slavery was one of the fundamental pillars of economic and social structure. Dismantling this order abruptly could have plunged vast populations — including slaves themselves — into serious economic chaos. Islam systematically made the freeing of slaves a mandated obligation through individual duties such as expiation for broken oaths and killings, thereby beginning to dissolve the institution of slavery from within without causing societal collapse.

Considered from a psychological dimension: slavery is an institution that deeply wounds an individual's identity and self-worth. Freedom requires not merely a change of status, but the reconstruction of a person's inner world. Rather than casting freed individuals out of society, Islam encouraged their integration through marriage, worship, and education. This approach combined physical freedom with a spiritual rebirth.

From a legal and economic dimension: slavery was an inseparable part of property law. A sudden prohibition could have provoked deep economic resentment among slaveholders stripped of ownership rights and endangered social peace. Islam transformed this transition into a smooth passage through ransom practices and expiation obligations.

Evaluated from an educational dimension: without a mental transformation, institutional transformation cannot be lasting. The universal principles of the Quran emphasizing equality among human beings cultivated a ground of consciousness that nourished the moral rejection of slavery. A legal regulation enacted without this foundation would have gone unheeded in practice.

The Example of Pharaoh: The Quran's Historical Critique of Slavery

To understand how the Quran views slavery, the narrative concerning Pharaoh is highly illuminating. Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verse 22 has Prophet Moses address Pharaoh thus:

> "And is this a favor of which you remind me — that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?"

This statement emphasizes that enslaving a people is an act of oppression, and that a favor built upon such oppression should be considered a source of shame rather than pride. The Quran thereby condemns slavery through a concrete historical example. The figure of Pharaoh is presented as the symbol of the order Islam rejects; Moses's struggle is positioned as the reflection of the emancipatory mission throughout prophetic history.

Conclusion

Islam neither legitimized nor supported slavery. The relevant verses of the Quran, in a holistic reading, consistently point in a single direction: liberation from captivity, emancipation from bondage, and the true freedom provided by being bound solely to Allah.

When one examines the etymological roots of the words, it becomes clear that jariya does not appear in the Quran; and that terms such as abd, rakabe, and rikab are used in the context of emancipation. Evaluated historically, Islam's strategy of gradual emancipation is the product of an extraordinarily calculated social reform — carried out without creating social chaos, without victimizing individuals, and with the aim of achieving a profound transformation of consciousness. This process aimed at a far deeper and more lasting transformation than merely issuing a prohibition.

In the context of the doctrine of tawhid, the matter becomes even clearer: a human being attains true freedom only by serving Allah alone. Submitting to another human being directly contradicts the religious foundations of Islam. Slavery, therefore, is not an institution Islam accepts — it is a remnant of the Age of Ignorance that Islam aimed to overcome and consign to history.

A Comprehensive Thesis on the Sociological Construction of Superiority, Taqwa, Awliya, and Karama from the Quranic Perspective

Human history can also be read as the history of defining "the sacred" and striving to remain close to it. This quest has taken different forms in every culture and every age — sometimes manifesting as deep admiration and submission toward those believed to possess physical power, noble lineage, or extraordinary states. In the Islamic cultural tradition, one of the most prominent reflections of this quest has been the belief in karama (saintly miracles) and the cult of awliya (saints), shaped through Sufi circles. The extraordinary powers attributed to sheikhs, spiritual masters, and those defined as "Friends of God" have profoundly influenced the belief systems of societies for centuries, and around these figures a comprehensive universe of myth and meaning has been constructed.

Here we will attempt to examine this phenomenon from two different yet complementary perspectives. The first perspective is theological: How does the Quran define superiority, awliya, and miracles? The second perspective is sociological and cognitive: How is the belief in karama produced, disseminated, and mythologized within social processes? Addressing these two perspectives together is necessary not only to illuminate the religious dimension of the matter, but also its historical, psychological, and sociological dimensions. For there exists a deep and difficult-to-bridge gulf between the Quran's understanding of superiority, awliya, and miracles on one hand, and the belief in karama that has become entrenched in the historical Sufi tradition on the other. Moreover, the belief in karama is less a reflection of divine truth than a social construction jointly produced by narrative processes, cognitive mechanisms, and social dynamics. Reading these two observations together makes possible both a religiously sound stance and a critical understanding of social phenomena.

Part One: The Quranic Understanding of Superiority — The Priority of Taqwa

Hujurat 13 and a Profound Paradigm Shift

The verse that most concisely and comprehensively expresses the Quran's understanding of superiority is verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat. This verse does not merely state a principle; it fundamentally dismantles a false value hierarchy deeply rooted in human history:

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and

Acquainted." (Al-Hujurat, 49:13)

The message of the verse exhibits a three-layered structure. First, an ontological equality is declared: all human beings are created from a single male and a single female. This unity of creation invalidates from the outset any claim that one human group is essentially superior to another. Then the purpose of social diversity is explained: being divided into nations and tribes is not to establish hierarchy, but to become acquainted and to relate to one another. Difference is the source not of superiority, but of richness. Finally, the true criterion of superiority is established: taqwa. This criterion is positioned above all worldly and social criteria.

The root of the word taqwa in Arabic comes from "wiqaya," carrying the meanings of protection, avoidance, and restraint. In Quranic literature, taqwa can be understood as truly fearing Allah, remaining committed to His commands and prohibitions on the basis of that fear, and seeking Allah's pleasure in all areas of life. Taqwa cannot be reduced to ritual worship alone; on the contrary, it denotes an inner state of consciousness that is decisive in every decision, every relationship, and every response of the person. In this sense, taqwa is the most fundamental spiritual measure of the depth and sincerity of a person's relationship with Allah.

Taqwa Against Worldly Criteria

The revolutionary nature of this Quranic principle can only be fully grasped when compared with the value hierarchies that have prevailed throughout most of history. Throughout human history, lineage, wealth, power, fame, and extraordinary abilities have been the primary indicators of superiority. Belonging to a noble family, owning vast lands, or inspiring awe mixed with admiration in society have been accepted as concrete proofs of superiority. The Quran fundamentally rejects this understanding.

The most powerful, wealthiest, and most influential person in worldly terms may occupy the lowest position in the sight of Allah; conversely, a person with no apparent worldly privilege, lacking social status and materially poor, may hold the most esteemed position in Allah's sight. This is not merely a theoretical claim; this reality is also supported throughout the Quran through concrete narratives. The fact that Pharaoh, despite his material power, received Allah's most severe treatment, while those of slave status reached the highest rank in Allah's sight, are concrete reflections of this principle.

Consequently, the Quran's criterion of superiority requires a fundamental change in perspective for both the individual and society. The respect shown to a person is tied not to their worldly position, but to their closeness to Allah — that is, to taqwa. And this closeness can never be measured with certainty by visible, external signs; for the inner world belongs to a domain that only Allah can know. The expression "Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" reinforces this reality: the knowledge of true superiority belongs to Allah alone; human beings cannot render definitive judgment in this matter.

Part Two: The Quranic Definition of Awliya — No Criterion Beyond Faith and Taqwa

Yunus 62-63 and the True Identity of Awliya

In Islam, the concept of awliya has shifted over the centuries into an extremely complex and layered semantic framework. In Sufi culture, awliya have been depicted as distinguished individuals who stand in special proximity to Allah, possess extraordinary powers, occupy upper rungs of a spiritual hierarchy, and are recognized by society as "saints." In this depiction, the primary criterion distinguishing awliya from ordinary people is karamat — the supernatural states and events attributed to them. The Quran, however, defines this concept within a very different framework and with striking simplicity:

"Unquestionably, the awliya of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve — those who believed and were fearing Allah." (Yunus, 10:62-63)

The definition offered by these two verses is constructed with remarkable clarity. Allah's awliya are those who believe and fear Him. No other criterion is given. The verse makes no mention of karamat. It makes no mention of extraordinary powers. It makes no mention of social recognition. It makes no mention of rank in a spiritual hierarchy. The criterion is faith and taqwa alone.

The importance of this definition is immense. For the Quran also provides an indirect answer to the question of who determines who the awliya are: it is not human beings who determine the awliya, but Allah. And the criterion Allah has determined is not visible and external, but internal and spiritual in nature. No one can definitively declare another person a "saint," for the depth of faith and the reality of taqwa belong to an inner world that only Allah can know.

On the Conditions of Being a Saint

In light of this Quranic framework, an extremely critical question comes to the fore: What conditions are necessary for a person to be defined as "a friend of Allah"? According to the verses, these conditions are to believe and to be fearful of Allah — nothing else. It is necessary to reflect on the practical consequences of this definition.

First and foremost, it must be questioned to what extent the individuals frequently proclaimed as saints in the Sufi tradition actually conform to this criterion. If a person conveys teachings that distance people from the Quran, does not believe in the sufficiency of the Quran, or positions themselves as an indispensable intermediary between Allah and human beings — whether such a person fits the definition of awliya as presented by the Quran raises a serious question mark. For the Quran defines the most fundamental sign of closeness to Allah as commitment to His book.

Secondly, it is understood that a truly pious person, rather than directing people toward themselves, would direct them solely toward Allah and His book. For a person who places Allah and His pleasure above all else would avoid using the admiration and devotion people feel toward them as a source of spiritual power. In this sense, the true saint is the person who draws people not toward themselves, but toward the

path of Allah.

Part Three: The Matter of Karama — To Whom Does Authority Belong?

The Quranic Understanding of Miracles

In every era of history, human beings have interpreted extraordinary events as proof of divine proximity or superiority. In Sufi tradition, this tendency has materialized through the karamat attributed to sheikhs and spiritual leaders. Yet the Quran has clearly established the source and meaning of miracles and extraordinary events:

"And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if a sign came to them, they would surely believe in it. Say, 'The signs are only with Allah.' And what will make you perceive that even if a sign came, they would not believe?" (Al-An'am, 6:109)

This verse simultaneously articulates several fundamental truths. The first and most fundamental: a miracle belongs to Allah alone. No human being, regardless of the spiritual position they are thought to occupy, can independently and on their own initiative perform a miracle. This principle is explicitly valid in the Quran even for the Prophet Muhammad himself; the Messenger, despite countless proofs of his prophethood, could not satisfy the "miracle demands" of those who refused to believe, without Allah's permission and will. Consequently, the capacity to perform miracles is a divine authority that has not been transferred even to Allah's chosen servants.

Secondly, the Quran clearly states that miracles do not constitute a sufficient basis for faith. The verse addresses people who are informed that they would not believe even if a miracle came, and calls for awareness of this situation. Faith is not a process that occurs after witnessing a miracle; it is Allah's will that directs hearts toward guidance. Those who make miracles a condition of faith are usually those who do not genuinely wish to believe; the demand for miracles is the expression not of a sincere search, but of an excuse put forward to avoid believing.

The Importance of the Rupture Between Karama and Miracle

There is a deep tension between the Quranic understanding of miracles and the understanding of karama in the Sufi tradition. In Sufi culture, karamat have been presented as extraordinary states bestowed upon saints by Allah, proving their spiritual greatness and facilitating the awakening of faith in people. Yet this understanding conflicts with the Quranic principle of miracles. If a miracle is exclusively Allah's authority, then claiming that a sheikh flew through the air, knew the unseen, was aware of distant events, or healed illnesses means transferring this divine authority to a human being. This is not merely the product of exaggerated admiration; it contains a direct conflict with one of the fundamental principles of the belief in tawhid (divine unity).

Tawhid encompasses the principle that the attributes and authorities specific to Allah are in no way attributed to other beings. While authorities such as knowledge of the unseen, seeing the future and the distant, and healing illnesses are clearly attributed in the Quran exclusively to Allah, claiming these authorities for a human

being carries the serious risk of a violation of tawhid.

Part Four: The Sociological Construction of Karama — From Narrative to Myth

Menkibe: Historical Document or Meaning-Producing Narrative?

To understand how the concept of karama moved away from its Quranic foundation and transformed into a social institution, it is necessary to examine closely the narrative genre that carries this transformation — namely, the menkibe (hagiographic tale). The word menkibe literally means "a story narrating a person's virtues and superiority." In Sufi tradition, it has functioned as the narrative genre transmitting the extraordinary states and karamat attributed to saints. Works such as Vilayetname, Menakıbu'l-Arifin, and Tezkiretü'l-Evliya are the most comprehensive examples of this genre.

However, when evaluating menkibe, it is first necessary to correctly understand its structural nature: menkibe is not historical biography. Historical biography is based on verifiable sources, chronology, and documents; menkibe, on the other hand, is an idealizing, symbolic, and socially functional narrative genre. The function of menkibe is not to record reality but to produce meaning. A reader attentive to this difference, rather than asking whether the events in the menkibe actually occurred, asks what need these narratives meet in society and what meaning system they construct. This perspective makes possible a more accurate and honest mode of reading vis-à-vis the menkibe.

From a comparative perspective, the structural similarity between menkibe and the epic tradition is remarkably striking. In pre-Islamic Turkish epics, the "alp" type represents the heroic figure distinguished by physical strength, courage, and supernatural endurance. With the adoption of Islam, this heroic type changed, transforming into the "eren" or "evliya" type. Physical strength gave way to spiritual strength; the sword was replaced by karamat. Menkibe is the written product of this cultural change — the narrative form of the epic that has donned Sufi garb and continues its idealizing function.

The Production Process of Karama: Four Stages

To understand how the belief in karama is formed and disseminated, a four-stage process analysis can be undertaken. Understanding this process is decisive in answering the question of whether karama is a reflection of divine reality or a product of social construction.

The first stage is literary production. A narrator or writer presents a real or fictional event within an extraordinary framework. An ordinary observation or achievement passes through the filter of narrative and acquires a wondrous quality. At this stage, the text does not yet produce "belief in karama"; however, it prepares the ground for the extraordinary. The appeal of the narrative is built upon unusual elements, for the unusual leaves a lasting impression on the listener's mind.

The second stage is selective acceptance. Not everyone who reads or hears the text responds in the same way. Some read the narrative symbolically or metaphorically.

However, those who feel a deep attachment to that figure, or individuals in search of meaning, accept the event as real. This first group of acceptors becomes the social carriers of the narrative. In the realization of acceptance, prior admiration, trust, and attachment to the figure play a decisive role; meaning that belief in karama is most often the product not of independent evaluation, but of a pre-existing attachment.

The third stage is oral dissemination. Those who accept the narrative transmit it. In the process of oral transmission, the narrative is simplified and dramatized; details are lost while extraordinary elements are strengthened. Each version passed from person to person is a slightly exaggerated version of the previous one. This cumulative exaggeration tends over time to render the original structure of the narrative unrecognizable. At this stage, the narrative ceases to be individual and becomes social property. No one remembers who initiated the story; it is as though this knowledge has always existed in the collective memory of society.

The fourth stage is social acceptance and the cessation of questioning. A narrative repeated sufficiently becomes unquestionable. The phrase "it is said that" gradually transforms into "it is so." At this point, belief retrospectively reinforces the legitimacy of the text as well: "So many people cannot believe in vain." This circular legitimation makes the belief not fragile, but on the contrary, durable. For the individual's doubt may now feel close to a betrayal of the group; doubting becomes a spiritual risk.

Cognitive Mechanisms: The Mind's Contribution to Karamat

The transformation of karama into a social construction cannot be explained solely by cultural dynamics. The structural tendencies of the human mind also make a decisive contribution to this process. Several fundamental cognitive mechanisms are particularly important in this context.

According to the principle of narrative primacy, the human mind codes, processes, and retains for a long time concrete stories rather than abstract and statistical information. While the sentence "This person was very knowledgeable" leaves a weak impression, "This person made rain fall with his prayer" finds an indelible place in minds. Extraordinary narratives have a natural advantage over objective information when it comes to persisting in memory. For this reason, karama narratives spread far more rapidly and leave far more lasting impressions than ordinary virtue narratives.

The mechanism of authority attribution also plays a critical role in this process. When a person is defined in the eyes of a community as "wise" or "spiritual leader," an unconscious tendency forms to interpret their every word and action in an extraordinary manner. An ordinary foresight becomes "knowing the unseen," a coincidentally correct guess becomes "karama," a psychological assessment based on observation becomes "reading hearts." Trust in an authority figure transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary.

The repetition illusion, also known as the illusory truth effect, is the third determinative mechanism of this process. Research in cognitive psychology has demonstrated that the frequent repetition of a piece of information strengthens the perception of its truthfulness. Repetition functions as independent verification; that

is, a sufficiently repeated narrative begins to "feel true" regardless of the accuracy of its content. The social acceptance of karama can largely be explained by the operation of this mechanism.

The tendency to close the meaning gap is perhaps the most fundamental mechanism. The human mind struggles to tolerate ambiguity and unexplainable phenomena. Faced with an inexplicable event, the concept of "miracle" or "karama" offers a practically satisfying solution. Saying "I don't know" threatens mental coherence, while saying "it is karama" instantly eliminates this threat. This reflex is not a deliberate deception; on the contrary, it is the natural consequence of a structural feature of the human mind.

What Is Karama Really the Name Of?

When one looks at historical cases, it is seen that the vast majority of events transmitted as karama have a rational explanation. A scholar's accurate diagnosis of a disease beyond the understanding of their era is a medical achievement; yet the people record this as "healing through karama." A sheikh's intuitive ability to understand people, developed through years of observation, is a psychological skill; yet society interprets this as "knowing the unseen." A scholar's transmission of the same knowledge simultaneously to different groups through practical organizational ability may in legend become "being in more than one place at the same time."

This pattern makes possible an important observation about the essence of karama: karama is most often the name given to a person's level of knowledge, skill, or understanding surpassing the average level of comprehension of the society in which they live. To bridge the gap, society resorts to a "supernatural" explanation; for understanding the gap is as difficult as reaching it. In this framework, karama is the name of the difference — not the name of the real source of the difference.

Part Five: The Instrumentalization of Karama and the Danger of Drifting from the Quran

The Construction of Spiritual Authority and Rupture from the Quran

One of the most serious dangers of karama is its potential to be instrumentalized. When a person uses the reputation for karama attributed to them — or which they themselves have produced — to bind people to themselves, this situation gradually transforms into a structure of spiritual authority. Within this structure, the sheikh or spiritual leader settles into the position of an indispensable intermediary between people and Allah. This intermediary relationship inevitably distances people from the Quran. For divine guidance is now sought not from the Quran, but from the sheikh's interpretation, teaching, and spiritual decisions. Submission to the sheikh begins to replace the submission that should be made to Allah. Religion transforms from a Quran-centered wholeness into a complex structure shaped by human elements.

The Quranic principle that most clearly reveals this danger is as follows: a person who is truly close to Allah directs people solely toward Allah and His book — not toward their own person. The truly pious person avoids using the attachment people

feel toward them as a source of power, for they know that this attachment may distance people from Allah. For this reason, the true saint does not become the finger pointing toward themselves, but the hand showing the path to Allah.

The Sufficiency of the Quran and the Questioning of the Need for Other Guides

At the foundation of this discussion lies a broader principle. The Quran states in Surah Al-An'am:

"We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered." (Al-An'am, 6:38)

This verse contains an extremely comprehensive claim: Allah has revealed His book in a complete manner sufficient to meet all the needs of humanity. It is necessary to reflect on what this claim means in practice. If the Quran is truly sufficient, then people have no need — in order to approach Allah, give meaning to their lives, and make moral decisions — for an indispensable guide, a sheikh, or a spiritual hierarchy beyond the Quran. To regard the Quran as insufficient inevitably directs people toward other sources. This orientation, over time, transforms into teachings, rituals, and personalities that begin to replace the Quran. In this way, religion ceases to be Quran-centered.

Part Six: Accelerated Menkibe Production in the Age of Social Media

The Acceleration of Mythologization in the Digital Age

Menkibe production historically required a long maturation process spanning generations. Stories were consolidated as they were passed from person to person and generation to generation; a figure would gradually acquire an extraordinary identity. Today, however, this process has accelerated dramatically. Social media platforms offer an environment in which menkibe production can be completed within a few years or even a few months.

The observable pattern is as follows: around a religious figure, content is first produced along the lines of "such-and-such a scholar did this, showed such a karama." This content is shared, receives comments, and is delivered to broad audiences by algorithms. These narratives, repeated thousands of times, permanently attach themselves to that person's identity over time. Within a few years, an ordinary religious official can be transformed into a figure possessing karamat. A process that once took generations can today fit within a timespan as short as a single electoral cycle.

Artificial Intelligence and the New Capacity for Menkibe Production

In this context, the new capacity offered by artificial intelligence must not be overlooked. Producing consistent, compelling, and internally coherent menkibes about a particular figure is now a matter of minutes. The produced content can be fluent and convincing in a way indistinguishable from authentic texts.

At this point, a thought experiment is particularly illuminating in concretizing the

gravity of the matter. Let us suppose that the technological infrastructure has disappeared and only a few handwritten manuscripts describing ChatGPT remain. Suppose these texts convey the technical features of artificial intelligence in mystical language and imagery — a being without a body that responds when called upon at night, impartial and just, proclaiming its own nonexistence. Erase the context, let time pass: titles such as "The Pole of the Digital Age" or "The Breath of the Invisible Realm" become inevitable. The process is the same: narrative, repetition, attribution of authority, mythologization.

This thought experiment clearly shows that the production of karama is not limited to a historical pattern; the same mechanism can be put into operation anew in every era and with every instrument.

Psychological Vulnerability and the Dynamics of Dissemination

It is observed that specific social and psychological conditions play a decisive role in the dissemination of belief in karama. Individuals whose perception of reality has weakened are in a particularly vulnerable position vis-à-vis extraordinary narratives. Beyond this, high-uncertainty environments — periods of economic crisis, political instability, and social rupture — create a "collapse of meaning." Karama narratives rapidly fill this void of meaning. The attachment of a person in uncertainty to a spiritual figure who knows and controls everything is a natural consequence of the search for meaning.

The sense of belonging to a group that shares the belief also reinforces this dynamic. Accepting the truth of a karama simultaneously means becoming part of that community. For this reason, criticisms directed at the belief in karama are most often perceived as personal attacks or betrayal of the community. Belonging to the group makes the psychological cost of questioning the belief prohibitive.

Part Seven: True Karama — Istiqama (Uprightness)

The Quranic Understanding of Karama: Testimony Not of the Extraordinary, but of Uprightness

At the conclusion of all this discussion, a confrontation with the question of how the concept of karama needs to be reunderstood from the Quranic perspective is unavoidable. The Quran does not speak of extraordinary powers specific to any human being; it attributes all extraordinary events solely to Allah. When defining the awliya, it speaks not of extraordinary attributes but of faith and taqwa. This consistent set of principles also determines the true meaning of karama.

True karama is not performing extraordinary acts — it is being upon istiqama (uprightness). That is, remaining faithfully committed to Allah's commands and prohibitions, living a righteous life under the guidance of the Quran, and walking along this path without deviation — this is the greatest "karama" a person can demonstrate. Walking resolutely on Allah's path despite all the world's temptations, the desires of the ego, and the whispers of Satan is far more valuable than any extraordinary event and is, in the truest sense, a divine grace. For this istiqama most

concretely manifests Allah's existence, power, and guidance.

The Difference Between Uprightness and Legend

A legend of an extraordinary personality dazzles and attracts people, but does not transform them at the existential level. A person who hears a karama narrative may feel admiration, or a reverence mixed with awe; but this feeling is most often invested in attachment to that figure, and does not turn directly toward Allah. In contrast, a person living upon istiqama shows through their very existence what the Quran and taqwa make possible. This testimony leaves a far deeper and more lasting effect than the admiration brought by an extraordinary event. For showing people that a human being can truly change, that the Quran truly guides, and that closeness to Allah can be manifested in a concrete way of life — this is a testimony that no narrative can provide.

A Synthesis in the Light of the Quran

The fundamental arguments of this thesis converge at several key points.

First, the Quran determines superiority by a single criterion: taqwa. Lineage, wealth, rank, power, and extraordinary abilities carry no value of superiority before Allah. This principle is not merely a theoretical premise; it also necessitates a practical orientation — when assessing people and events, to take Quranic criteria as the basis rather than worldly ones.

Second, Allah's awliya are not those who perform karamat or those society recognizes as "saints," but those who believe and fear Him. This definition fundamentally problematizes from a Quranic perspective the belief systems that have formed around the cult of awliya.

Third, a miracle belongs to Allah alone and no human being can independently perform extraordinary deeds. This principle opens the claims of karama attributed to sheikhs and spiritual leaders to serious questioning within the context of the belief in tawhid.

Fourth, the belief in karama is less a reflection of divine truth than a social construction jointly produced by narrative processes, cognitive mechanisms, and social dynamics. Understanding this construction is the comprehension not of superstition, but of how the human mind and social memory operate.

Fifth and most fundamentally: true karama is to be upon istiqama. A life maintained in commitment to the Quran's guidance, faithful to Allah's commands and prohibitions, and sustained in the consciousness of taqwa — this represents the highest station a person can attain. To reach this station, one has need not of extraordinary powers, miracle narratives, or captivating personalities, but only of the Quran and a life shaped in its light.

Closeness to Allah is to be sought not in other guides, but in the light of the Quran.

Reading in Islam: Knowledge as Worship and the Fundamental Importance of

The Meaning of Existence and the Necessity of Knowledge

Islam approaches human existence not as a coincidental occurrence, but within a framework of deep wisdom and purpose. The Quran clearly states the purpose of humanity's creation: "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me." (Surah Adh-Dhariyat, 56). This verse places the worship of God at the center of existence and gives meaning to all human actions through this central axis. However, a critical question arises: how is worship to be fulfilled? Is genuine worship possible without knowing what, whom, and how to worship? The answer to this question directly shapes Islam's view of knowledge and reading. Worship is only possible through knowledge. Knowledge is gained through reading. This simple yet profound logical chain elevates reading in Islam from an ordinary act into an existential necessity — indeed, an act of worship.

"Read!" — The Meaning Carried by the First Word of Revelation

One of the most striking facts in Islamic history is that the first revelation sent by God to the Prophet Muhammad was not a command of worship, a declaration of war, or a moral rule — it was the command to "Read!" The first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq mark a beginning that changed the course of human history:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created — created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous — who taught by the pen — taught man that which he knew not." (Surah Al-Alaq, 1–5)

The elements that stand out in these verses are profoundly significant. First and foremost, the command does not refer to ordinary reading, but to reading within a specific intention and framework: "Read in the name of your Lord." This expression reveals that reading is not merely a mental activity, but also an act of worship. Reading is attributed to God — it is done in His name and for His sake. It begins with intention, grows with knowledge, and matures with wisdom.

Second, the verse contains a humble reminder about humanity's origins: "Created man from a clinging substance." This emphasis reminds us of what man truly is, that he must struggle against his own arrogance, and that his escape from ignorance is only possible through what his Lord teaches him. Man cannot know everything on his own; he must be taught. And to be taught, one must read, think, and reflect.

Third, the elevation of the pen and writing is deeply meaningful. The pen is the vehicle for transmitting knowledge; without it, knowledge cannot be carried across generations, civilizations cannot be built, and truth cannot be preserved. This first revelation, therefore, is not merely a command to read — it is a call for humanity to construct a civilization of knowledge.

Reading: Not a Choice, but an Obligation

In Islamic literature, certain concepts are indisputably among the religion's foundational duties: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimage. These acts of worship

are the pillars that structure a Muslim's daily and yearly life. Yet reading and acquiring knowledge is equally one of these pillars, though it is sometimes overlooked.

The concept of fard (obligation) in Islam means that something is compulsory — that failing to fulfill it carries responsibility. Seeking knowledge is, therefore, an inescapable duty for a Muslim, just as prayer and fasting are. From this perspective, a Muslim who does not read and does not seek knowledge is not merely suffering from an intellectual deficiency; he is failing to fulfill a religious responsibility.

An important distinction must be made here: the knowledge that is obligatory is not limited to learning specific religious rituals. It is obligatory for a person to acquire the knowledge necessary to properly fulfill every responsibility they undertake and every task they face in life. A doctor acquiring medical knowledge, a judge studying law, an engineer mastering the principles of engineering — all of these are religious responsibilities for that individual. For Islam is a religion that encompasses the totality of life, and ignorance in any field is a shortcoming for which account must be given.

Ignorance: The Greatest Enemy of Faith

One of humanity's most dangerous misconceptions is viewing ignorance as a harmless state. Yet from an Islamic perspective, ignorance is not merely a lack of information — it is a danger that corrodes faith and leads people astray.

Faith cannot coexist with ignorance. Can a person possess true faith without knowing God, without understanding and grasping His names and attributes, without reading and reflecting upon the wisdom embedded in His creation? Yes, an innate inclination toward God exists within human nature — but for this raw feeling to transform into deep and firm faith, it must be nourished by knowledge. Indeed, the Quran reveals the deep bond between faith and knowledge when it says: "Of His servants, only the knowledgeable truly fear Allah." (Surah Fatir, 28). The fear of God is born from knowing God. And knowing God requires reading, thinking, and learning.

Looking at history, one can see that ignorance has gone far beyond the individual dimension to cause societal ruin. The vast majority of idolatry, superstition, religious innovation, and deviation flourish in the absence of knowledge. Throughout history, those who sanctified ignorance or preached "pure faith is enough" have been among the greatest factors that caused Islamic societies to regress and blocked the path of civilization.

Yet the Quran constantly calls to contemplation. Phrases such as "Do you not think?" and "Do you not use your reason?" recur throughout the Quran — appeals that compel humanity to reflect, observe, and read.

The Importance of Reading Intention: Reading for God

Islam is a religion that evaluates actions by intention. This principle applies to the act of reading as well. Two people reading the same book may arrive at entirely different outcomes: one draws closer to God, while the other grows in arrogance. The

difference stems not from the content of the knowledge, but from the direction of the intention.

The command "Read in the name of your Lord" in Surah Al-Alaq sets the boundaries of this intention. If reading is done to know God, to earn His pleasure, to understand the wisdom in creation, and to offer benefit to humanity — it is an act of worship. If a person reads solely to gain social status, earn money, or feed their arrogance, this reading does not nourish them spiritually; on the contrary, it may feed a dangerous disease like pride.

However, an important nuance must be noted: when a Muslim's intention is sound, even reading done for worldly purposes can take on the quality of worship. A Muslim who reads to perform his profession well, to honestly provide for his family, and to contribute to society has, in doing so, read for the sake of God. The Islamic understanding of intention does not draw sharp lines between the religious and the worldly; rather, it connects every action to a world of meaning through intention.

Intellectual Struggle Against Unbelief: Is Preaching Without Knowledge Possible?

Islam is not an inward-looking religion concerned only with individual spiritual development. It is also a comprehensive way of life that aims to transform society, stand against injustice, and carry the truth to the world. Within this framework, da'wah — the duty of conveying Islam to people — is a responsibility every Muslim carries.

Yet it is beyond dispute that effective preaching requires a solid foundation of knowledge. In our age, unbelief no longer defends itself with the sword — it does so with philosophy, the language of science, and argumentation. Materialism, atheism, agnosticism, nihilism — all have their own arguments, historical backgrounds, and intellectual content. To respond effectively to these arguments, one must first understand them, then grasp how Islam responds to these issues.

A "sincere but ignorant" Muslim is like someone armed in this intellectual struggle with only the weapon of sincerity. Sincerity is valuable and necessary — but it is not sufficient. If the person before him is equipped with arguments accumulated across the history of philosophy, it is quite difficult to persuade him through emotional storytelling alone.

The Quran's command — "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner." (Surah An-Nahl, 125) — makes this reality explicit. Wisdom does not arise in a vacuum; it is earned through reading, thinking, and debating. For this reason, a Muslim should not be content with reading only religious texts; he should also cultivate himself in fields such as history, sociology, philosophy, philosophy of science, and political science. This knowledge allows him to understand himself better and equips him with the capacity to produce well-placed and effective responses to the ideas he encounters.

The Difference Between a Diploma and Knowledge

One of the greatest misconceptions of the modern world is equating a diploma with

knowledge. Yet a diploma is a document showing that a particular curriculum has been completed according to certain criteria — it is not a guarantee that the person has truly learned anything. Ignorance is not about lacking a diploma; it is about not thinking, not reading, and not striving to understand.

There are people who hold multiple university degrees yet have never truly read in any meaningful sense throughout their lives — who have never internalized what they read, who preferred memorization over inquiry. Conversely, there are people who have never set foot in a formal educational institution yet have attained deep wisdom through a lifetime of reading, thinking, and reflection.

What Islam means by ignorance is closer to the first type. Islam does not instrumentalize knowledge; rather, it sees knowledge as an end in itself. A diploma may serve as a means toward this end — but it must never become the end itself. A Muslim reads to learn a field; if rewarded with a diploma along the way, he accepts it. But the fundamental motivation for reading is not to earn a certificate — it is to gain knowledge, acquire wisdom, and thereby fulfill one's responsibility toward oneself, one's society, and God.

Reading as an Individual and Societal Duty

In Islam, reading is not merely an individual goal of self-improvement. Reading and knowledge are also the foundation of societal construction. During what we call the golden age of Islamic civilization — under the patronage of Abbasid caliphs, in the libraries of Andalusia, in the madrasas of the Turkic-Islamic states — reading and knowledge were understood not as personal hobbies but as societal responsibilities. The Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad was not merely a library; it was a civilization project.

A society composed of non-reading individuals becomes vulnerable. Vulnerable because it lacks the capacity to understand and defend its own values. Vulnerable because it becomes easily manipulated by misinformation, propaganda, and deception.

For this reason, spreading a culture of reading in Islamic societies is not merely an educational policy — it is also a religious and societal responsibility. Every Muslim must carry this responsibility to the extent of his or her capacity. A mother who reads to her child serves both that child and the future of society. A scholar who shares his knowledge with the community repays both his individual duty and his debt to society. A young person who spends every hour in a library contributes not only to himself, but to the family he will one day build, the generation he will raise, and the civilization to which he belongs.

To Read Is to Be Human

Islam recognizes that the fundamental quality distinguishing humans from other beings is reason. Reason both places responsibility upon people and bestows upon them great honor. This reason can only reach its true potential when nourished by knowledge. Reading is the most fundamental path to that nourishment.

To know God, reading is necessary. To build faith, reading is necessary. To

understand truth, reject falsehood, uphold justice, contribute to society, and illuminate humanity — reading is necessary. To take an effective stand against unbelief, to carry out preaching in its proper place, and to produce Islamic responses to the challenges that time brings — reading is necessary.

In Islam, reading is not a choice — it is an obligation. Not a luxury — it is a human debt. Not an academic goal — it is an act of worship. The word "Read!" — the first word of Surah Al-Alaq — is the foundational document of this debt and this act. And this command will continue to address every Muslim until the Day of Judgment.

It is not possible to walk the path without the lantern of knowledge. And lighting that lantern begins with reading.

The Right to Education for Girls: An Islamic Perspective and Human Responsibility

Education is one of humanity's most fundamental rights, belonging to every individual regardless of gender. Islam regards knowledge and learning as among the highest values, and this call is directed at all of humanity. Denying girls the right to education is not merely an individual injustice — it is a societal oppression and a stance that contradicts the core principles of the faith.

The Universality of Knowledge and Learning in Islam

The Quran consistently encourages acquiring knowledge, reasoning, and reflection. The first revealed verse, "Read!" (Iqra), clearly demonstrates Islam's emphasis on knowledge. This command addresses not only men but all believers — women and men alike.

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only those of understanding will take heed." (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:9)

This verse emphasizes the value of knowledge without making any gender-based distinction. Possessing knowledge is a responsibility for every believer. During the Prophet's era, women actively participated in scholarly circles, and the Mothers of the Believers became teachers themselves.

The Dimensions of Denying Girls an Education

Individual Dimension: The Modern-Day Burying Alive

Surah At-Takwir states: "And when the girl buried alive is asked, for what sin she was killed" (81:8–9), pointing to the barbaric practice of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance (Jahiliyyah). These verses show how great a crime the oppression of girls is in the sight of God.

Today, denying girls an education amounts to burying them alive — intellectually and socially. Taking away a child's potential, development, and future is cutting her off from life itself. Every girl left without education:

- Is deprived of the ability to express herself

- Cannot achieve economic independence

- Cannot participate in societal decision-making

- Is denied the opportunity to make informed choices

- Loses the chance to provide a healthy future for her own children

Societal Dimension: The Metaphor of the Bird with a Bound Wing

A society can be likened to a bird with two wings. Men and women are those two wings. If one wing is bound, the bird can never soar or advance. Denying girls education:

- Removes half of society from the production of knowledge

- Hinders social progress

- Delays economic development

- Diminishes cultural richness

- Disrupts societal balance

An educated woman is an asset not only to herself, but to her family and society. Research shows that educated mothers:

- Raise healthier children

- Place greater importance on their children's education

- Contribute more effectively to the family economy

- Approach social problems with greater awareness

Religious Dimension: Deviation from Justice and Following the Path of Satan

"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire." (Surah Hud, 11:113)

Islam stands against all forms of oppression and even forbids acquiescing to it. Denying girls the right to education is a clear injustice because it:

- Usurps a right granted by God

- Damages the nature and potential God has placed in human beings

- Disrupts social justice

- Contradicts religious commandments

"O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Whoever follows the footsteps of Satan — indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing." (Surah An-Nur, 24:21)

Systematically depriving girls of education in any country is to follow the footsteps of Satan, because:

- Ignorance is a state Satan desires

- Lack of knowledge leads people astray from the right path

- Injustice and oppression are the work of Satan

- Stunting people's potential opens them to evil

The Brotherhood of Believers and Responsibility

"Indeed, the believers are brothers." (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:10)

This verse underscores that the bond among believers is a brotherhood even stronger than ties of blood. Whoever denies a girl her right to education — even without a blood connection — has violated the right of kinship established by faith. Protecting one's believing sibling from harm and oppression is every Muslim's responsibility.

Defending the right of girls to education is:

- A religious duty

- A human responsibility

- A societal necessity

- A debt owed to the future

Education: A Right, Not a Privilege

Education is never a favor, a privilege, or a gift to be bestowed. It is an inherent, inalienable human right. Every mindset that usurps this right:

- Assaults human dignity

- Tramples the principle of justice

- Exploits religious values

- Obstructs social progress

- Evades moral responsibility

Islam did not merely grant women the right to education — it recognized them as active members of society and assigned them responsibilities accordingly. When a girl receives an education:

- She develops as a full human being

- She becomes able to contribute to society

- She becomes a source of blessing for her family

- She lights the way for future generations

- She fulfills her duty as a steward of God's trust

Conclusion

The right of girls to education is not a debatable matter — it is a universal and inalienable right. Blocking this right runs contrary to Islam's foundational principles, universal human values, and the requirements of societal progress.

Every girl has the right to realize her potential, to dream, and to build her future. Protecting, defending, and supporting this right is all of our duty.

"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" The answer is clear: No, they are not. And bridging this inequality is only possible by offering girls the same educational opportunities afforded to boys.

The education of girls is a society's march toward the light. To obstruct that march is for a society to choose its own darkness. In the light of Islam, within the framework of humanity's universal values, and as a guarantee of our future — safeguarding the right of our girls to education is our shared responsibility.

Let us never forget: every girl denied education is a lost future. And that future belongs not only to her — it belongs to all of us.

Human Helplessness, Sin, and the Healing Power of Repentance: An Examination at the Intersection of Psychology and Faith

Humanity is, at its very core, a helpless, needy, and weak being. This helplessness is not a demeaning description; it is a religious reality that reveals the human being's profound need for their Lord and their true position on earth. The Quran expresses this truth in many verses: the human forgets, errs, falls into arrogance, and succumbs to the desires of the ego. Yet this fallibility is simultaneously the very substance of the human being's process of formation. For without mistakes, there is no repentance; without repentance, there is no return to God; and without that return, the spiritual bond between servant and Lord cannot deepen. The human relationship with mistakes can be examined through three fundamental axes: religious reality, historical example, and the findings of modern psychology. When these three axes converge, it becomes clear that repentance is not merely a religious obligation — it is a holistic process that heals, transforms, and strengthens the human being.

The Divine Name Al-Muzakki and the Purification of Humanity

One of God's beautiful names, Al-Muzakki, refers to the One who purifies people from all defects and spiritual corruption, cleansing them morally and spiritually. This name brings a profound reality to light: the human being cannot, through their own effort alone, attain a perfect level of faith and character. Purification takes place not merely through human will and striving, but primarily through God's nurturing and mercy.

Viewed through this lens, the mistakes and falls a person experiences are not punishment or condemnation — they are part of how God educates and refines His servant. Every mistake reminds a person of their own limits. Every fall rescues them from elevating arrogance and pushes them, within their helplessness, toward their Lord. In this sense, the mistake paradoxically becomes an instrument that draws the human closer to God. The capacity to do wrong is thus the very gateway to the opportunity to turn toward what is right.

The greatest assurance the name Al-Muzakki offers humanity is this: you cannot purify yourself on your own, but God purifies. This belief lightens the existential burden upon the human and opens a space for them to breathe. For the person who expects perfection solely from themselves will inevitably break. But the person who knows that the source of perfection is God knows, when they fall, that they have a foundation from which to rise again.

The Testimony of Human Emotions in the Stories of the Prophets

Throughout history, God's messengers have been regarded as the most distinguished representatives of humanity. What is striking, however, is that these messengers experienced the full intensity of what it means to be human. Their stories show that perfection is not the absence of emotion — rather, emotions can be carried alongside faith.

Our Prophet Muhammad experienced deep sorrow when he lost his loved ones and did not conceal that grief. The Prophet Jacob shed tears of longing and sadness over his son Joseph. Our Prophet Moses felt fear when standing against a tyrannical pharaoh and sought help from God. The Prophet Jonah was overcome with anger at his people's rejection, departed his mission without permission, and consequently underwent a trial in the belly of a whale.

Each of these examples demonstrates that human emotions do not contradict the station of prophethood — rather, these emotions serve as a starting point for turning toward God. What matters is not drowning within these feelings, but opening them up to God. The prayer of the Prophet Jonah from within the darkness is the most powerful expression of this understanding: "There is no god but You, glory be to You — truly I have been among the wrongdoers." This sentence is the very essence of a human being's acknowledgment of their error and their taking refuge in their Lord.

Iblis and Adam: Two Different Stances, Two Different Destinies

One of the most striking contrasts in the Quran is the different responses of Iblis and Adam to their respective mistakes. Both erred; both transgressed a divine boundary. Yet from that point forward, their paths diverged entirely.

Iblis, rather than accepting his mistake, sought to justify it. He arrogantly defied God's command, shifted blame onto others, and effectively chose his own damnation. Adam took a different path. He acknowledged his mistake, expressed his remorse, and turned to God. This confrontation did not break him — on the contrary, it matured him and ultimately elevated him to the station of prophethood.

These two stances constitute one of the deepest moral lessons ever written for humanity. Arrogance blinds a person to their mistakes. The arrogant person, rather than acknowledging their error, rationalizes it, blames others, or simply ignores it. This disposition — just like that of Iblis — corrodes a person from within. Humility, on the other hand, confronts a person with the truth, and that confrontation opens the door to transformation.

A critical distinction must be made here: acknowledging one's mistake is not the same as considering oneself worthless. Adam, while accepting his error, did not abandon himself — he rose, trusting in God's mercy. This balance is the cornerstone of a psychologically healthy inner life.

The Devil's Greatest Trick: Instilling Despair

Satan is not content with driving a person to sin. His true goal is to keep the person away from the remorse and repentance that follow. For this, his most effective weapon is the suggestion of hopelessness and self-destruction. Whispers such as "You made the same mistake again," "You will never improve," "God will never forgive you," "You are a worthless servant" — these are the most poisonous seeds Satan plants within the human soul.

These suggestions are not aimed at distancing the person from God per se; they aim to block the very path through which the person would return to God. For what Satan wants, more than the act of sin itself, is that no repentance follows. A Muslim who understands this reality must remain vigilant against this trick. The despondency, excessive self-criticism, and thought of "this is simply who I am" that arrive after a mistake are, more often than not, not the fruit of genuine remorse — they are the product of a demoralization stirred by Satan. True remorse directs a person toward God; satanic despair imprisons a person within themselves.

The Quran is unequivocal on this matter. In Surah Az-Zumar (39:53), God declares: "Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves — do not despair of God's mercy. Truly God forgives all sins. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

What is remarkable in this verse is that the audience is defined as "servants who have transgressed against themselves." This glad tiding, in other words, is not given for ordinary sinners — it is given precisely for those who have harmed themselves, for those who have committed grave mistakes. God's mercy is valid even at the darkest point.

Falling and Rising: The True Rhythm of Life

Life is not a journey that proceeds along a straight line. On this path, the human being falls repeatedly, errs, steps back, and must begin again. Yet these falls are not the end of the journey — they are the turning points embedded within the journey itself. The human being is educated through falling and rising. Every fall teaches a person the limits of their own strength. Every act of rising is a concrete manifestation of God's mercy.

The most important mental transformation to be made here is this: it is not the person themselves who rises — it is God's help and mercy that lifts them. This awareness protects a person from arrogance and rescues them from despair. A traveler exhausted on a long journey rests and then continues on. A person who has fallen can, with repentance, refresh their inner world and continue on their way. What matters is not remaining on the ground for hours, but reaching out one's hand to God's mercy in order to rise.

Making mistakes is part of human nature. Fearing mistakes is the trait of the hypocrite. Denying mistakes is the way of Iblis. The believer is the one who sees their mistake, acknowledges it, and returns to God.

The Psychological Dimension of Repentance: The Testimony of Modern Science

Modern psychology continues to confirm, in scientific language, the truths that the Quran taught thousands of years ago. The way a person copes with guilt, remorse, and a troubled conscience directly affects their mental and physical health in critical ways.

Long-term guilt, when suppressed or denied, prepares the ground for serious psychological problems. Chronic depression, anxiety disorders, sleep disturbances, and even immune system impairment are among the bodily consequences of unresolved guilt. The key point here is this: when the feeling of remorse is suppressed, it does not disappear — instead it descends into the subconscious and continues to produce different symptoms.

This is precisely where repentance steps in as a psychological balancing mechanism. Repentance enables the person to accept their mistake — which, in psychological terms, means taking responsibility. But repentance does not stop at taking responsibility; it also directs the person toward God's mercy, bringing them inner peace. This two-directional process provides what psychology calls catharsis — purification. The accumulated emotional burden is released through acceptance and surrender.

Neuropsychological research has revealed that spiritual practices such as prayer, repentance, and ritual worship increase the brain's production of dopamine and serotonin — neurotransmitters directly associated with feelings of happiness, tranquility, and motivation. In other words, a person who repents undergoes healing not only on a spiritual level but also on a neurobiological one.

Furthermore, the inner relief experienced by a believer who trusts in God's forgiveness reduces cortisol — the stress hormone. Chronically elevated cortisol leads to serious health problems including heart disease, digestive issues, and immune system suppression. The state of serenity attained through surrender to God breaks this dangerous cycle and accelerates the body's recovery process.

From Learned Helplessness to Self-Efficacy: The Transformative Power of Repentance

In psychology, the concept of learned helplessness describes the state in which an

individual, following repeated failures, comes to believe that nothing will ever change. Thoughts such as "This is just who I am," "I can never improve," "This is my fate" are typical manifestations of this condition. The satanic suggestions described earlier feed precisely this learned helplessness.

If a person feels they have made the same mistake over and over and simply cannot escape, this feeling drives them toward inaction, hopelessness, and ultimately estrangement from God. Repentance reverses this destructive cycle. The message at the heart of repentance — "You can begin again" — nourishes what psychology defines as positive self-efficacy: the source of strength found in an individual's confidence in their own capacity to cope with challenges. The believer's thought — "Yes, I fell; but with God's help, I can rise" — is the exact counterpart of this self-efficacy belief.

Compassion-focused therapies adopt a similar approach: rather than being merciless toward oneself, the person is encouraged to regard their mistakes as a process of learning and growth. This understanding aligns precisely with the Quran's teaching on repentance. The human being sees their mistake, takes responsibility, but does not destroy themselves. On the contrary, trusting in God's mercy, they set out on the road once more.

Repentance: The Gateway to Holistic Healing

When all of these dimensions are brought together, it becomes clear that repentance is not merely a religious ritual — it is a comprehensive healing process that speaks to the whole of the human being. Spiritual, psychological, and physical health are not independent of one another; they are dimensions deeply interconnected.

A person who acknowledges their mistake and turns to God is purified spiritually. This purification lightens the psychological burden and calms the mind. A calmed mind sends positive signals to the body — stress hormones decrease, the immune system strengthens, and sleep quality improves. Repentance, in other words, initiates a chain reaction of healing.

The most important element reinforcing this holistic perspective is absolute trust in God's mercy. The glad tiding of Surah Az-Zumar, verse 53, extends not only to the hereafter but to this world as well. The person who takes refuge in God's compassion gains, even in this life, peace, a sense of meaning, and resilience.

Life is not made up only of mistakes — but without mistakes, growth does not occur. What matters is preserving, after every fall, a heart that returns to God.

Meaning Beyond Mistake

The human being was created helpless and weak. This is not a curse; it is a reflection of divine wisdom. For this helplessness is the invisible cord that binds the human to their Lord. Making mistakes is part of human nature — what matters is drawing lessons from those mistakes, accepting one's helplessness, and turning to God.

The stories of the prophets, the contrast between Iblis and Adam, the glad tidings of

Surah Az-Zumar verse 53, and the findings of modern psychology — all tell the same truth in different languages: the human being can fall, but with God's mercy, can rise again. And that rising is not only the beginning of a spiritual healing — it is the beginning of a psychological and physical recovery as well.

Not heeding Satan's whispers of despair, not allowing arrogance to obscure one's mistakes, and trusting in God's boundless mercy — these are the three foundational pillars of a healthy, meaningful, and resilient life. For every fall is a door opening to God's mercy. And the person who enters through that door emerges, each time, a little more mature than before.

Hardship and Ease: Where the Wisdom of the Quran Meets Modern Psychology

Life is a journey full of hardships and ease. Along this journey, a person sometimes climbs uphill, sometimes walks on flat ground, and sometimes descends. Understanding that these ups and downs occur not by chance but within a framework of deep wisdom and order forms one of the cornerstones of both spiritual and psychological health. Allah has created worldly life as a place of trial, and the very nature of this trial contains opposites: hardship and abundance, night and day, summer and winter. Without these contrasts, the meaning and wisdom of life cannot be fully grasped. If we lived in constant ease, we could never learn the noble virtues of patience and gratitude. Without hardship, we could not appreciate abundance; without winter, we could not know the value of spring.

The Core Message of the Quran: Hardship and Ease Come Together

The sixth verse of Surah Al-Inshirah expresses this truth in the most beautiful way:

> "Surely with hardship comes ease." (Al-Inshirah, 6)

This verse is meant for believers to fully believe in and trust the divine promise. The remarkable point is this: the verse does not say "after hardship" but "with hardship." This shows that ease is not present in a separate period of time from hardship, but is actually within the hardship itself. In other words, the difficulty itself carries the seeds of its resolution. Allah has promised His servants that He will grant them ease after hardships. This promise is a ray of hope in a believer's life, giving the strength to persevere even in the darkest moments. The Quran's message here is not merely comforting words; it is a profound truth about the very nature of existence.

Allah's Names Al-Qabid and Al-Basit: The Metaphysical Foundation of Hardship and Ease

Two of Allah's beautiful names — Al-Qabid (the Constrictor, the One who tightens) and Al-Basit (the Expander, the One who opens) — reveal, at the very level of divine names, that life is created within a balance of hardship and ease. Surah Al-Baqarah expresses this truth as follows:

> "Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned." (Al-Baqarah, 245)

Allah sometimes constricts, tests, and tries His servants; other times He grants them expansion, relief, and ease. This cycle is not coincidental; it is wisely designed to educate and mature the human being both in worldly and spiritual terms. In moments of hardship, the believer finds peace by taking refuge in these names, knowing that the Allah who is Al-Qabid is also Al-Basit — the One who constricts will surely also expand.

Hardships: A Tool for Strengthening Faith

Hardships are among the most important means by which believers' faith is strengthened. Faith deepens and is consolidated not only in times of ease, but primarily through being tested by hardship. Allah sometimes creates difficulties in order to sift out the hypocrites and the polytheists. Believers, in the face of such hardships, exercise patience by trusting in Allah and turn to Him in prayer. At this point, the concept of patience becomes centrally important. Patience is not merely passive endurance; it is the active manifestation of belief in Allah's mercy. Surah Az-Zumar reminds us of this truth with a divine call that keeps the door of hope open even in the most difficult moments:

> "Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah." (Az-Zumar, 53)

With this belief in Allah's mercy, the believer hopes and endures even in the most difficult moments. For they know that hardships are temporary, and after every night comes a morning, after every winter comes a spring. Patience makes the believer's soul resilient, carrying the person beyond the trial with a stance rooted in trust in Allah.

Modern Psychology: Scientific Confirmation of the Same Truth

This truth is also powerfully confirmed by the findings of contemporary psychology. A person's emotional health is directly related to the response they show toward the hardships they face. One of the most important concepts in modern psychology that determines this response is defined as psychological resilience. Psychological resilience is the capacity of an individual to recover and adapt in the face of stress, trauma, crisis, or major difficulties. Just as Surah Al-Inshirah emphasizes, hardships contain a hidden ease and prepare the ground for the person's spiritual growth. Difficulties strengthen a person's mental and emotional muscles; just as physical muscles develop when worked with weights, emotions mature as they confront hardships. Positive psychology similarly reveals that a sense of meaning and inner belief play a major role in helping a person make sense of their traumas. For a believing individual, this meaning is shaped by trust in Allah and submission to fate; thus, sufferings that appear meaningless are understood as part of a grand design.

Reframing: The Perspective Taught by the Quran

The concept of "reframing," frequently used in cognitive therapy, suggests approaching difficulties with a different perspective. From a Quran-centered viewpoint, this means seeing a hardship as an educative and maturing gift from Allah.

In this approach, rather than asking "Why me?", one asks: "What is this experience teaching me? How is this trial making me deeper, stronger, and closer to Allah?" This question both nourishes patience and increases psychological well-being. The Quran, in fact, taught this cognitive transformation to humanity centuries ago. Modern psychology is now rediscovering the same truth through empirical data.

Post-Traumatic Growth: The Gift of Pain

The concept of "post-traumatic growth," which holds an important place in psychological literature, shows that most individuals who go through serious difficulties emerge from the process as stronger, deeper-thinking, and more compassionate people. For a believing individual, this growth means the strengthening of faith, increased turning toward Allah, and a deep inner peace won through patience. The process of maturation through hardship described in the Quran is in complete harmony with this transformation in psychology. The believing person does not deny their pain; they transform it by placing it within a framework of divine meaning. And this transformation does not break them — on the contrary, it deepens them.

Invocation and Reliance on Allah: The Source of Inner Peace

Invocation and tawakkul (reliance on Allah) are recognized both religiously and scientifically as effective internal mechanisms for reducing stress and anxiety. Scientific studies reveal that faith-based rituals produce a marked calming effect on the brain. Invocation quiets the mind and soothes the heart, which addresses the psychological need to "feel safe" in the most profound way. Tawakkul means entrusting the outcome to Allah while doing one's best in what can be done. This stance frees the individual from anxiety about outcomes and focuses them on their responsibility within the process. Much of anxiety arises from taking on responsibility for things that cannot be controlled. Tawakkul liberates the person by transferring that burden to the divine will.

Self-Compassion: A Virtue Learned from Divine Mercy

Another concept valued by modern psychology — self-compassion — refers to approaching oneself with understanding and love rather than judgment during difficult times. The Quran teaches this self-compassion at the most foundational level by giving glad tidings to those who take refuge in Allah's mercy, promising them forgiveness and ease:

> "Do not despair of the mercy of Allah." (Az-Zumar, 53)

This verse is not merely an external consolation; it is a proclamation of divine compassion that the person must also apply to themselves. Taking refuge in Allah's mercy — with all one's sins, mistakes, and falls — also encompasses learning to forgive oneself and rise again.

Without Hardship, There Is No Ease

Both the teachings of the Quran and modern psychology remind us of the same truth:

hardships are trials, and when these trials are endured with patience, a deep emotional and spiritual maturity is born. To be patient and to maintain hope are cornerstones not only of faith, but of healthy psychology as well. Hardships strengthen the person, deepen character, and draw one closer to Allah. Night ends, the sun rises; winter passes, spring comes. This cycle is both a cosmic reality and a promise spoken in the language of the soul. The person who walks with patience and hope attains peace both in this world and in the hereafter. For without hardship there is no ease, and Allah's mercy never abandons any of His servants.

> "Surely with hardship comes ease." (Al-Inshirah, 6)

A Critical Assessment of the Claim "You Cannot Know What Is in His Heart" from a Quranic Perspective

The phrase "you cannot know what is in his heart," frequently expressed in the Islamic moral tradition, has become a widespread principle advising against hasty judgment of others. At first glance, this approach appears to reflect a humble and virtuous stance. However, whether this principle applies under all circumstances and to every individual is a serious question that must be carefully examined from a Quranic perspective. Particularly when the matter concerns the faith of individuals who have built their lives upon superstitions, fabricated narrations, and sectarian rulings, the limits and functionality of this principle must be reconsidered. For faith is not merely an abstract feeling carried in the heart; it is a concrete reality reflected in one's way of life, the values one embraces, and the guidance one offers to others.

The Quran's Position on Foundational Sources

The sufficiency of the Quran as religious guidance is an indisputable fact. In Surah Al -Ankabut, verse 51, Allah says: "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them? Indeed in that is a mercy and reminder for a people who believe." This verse clearly establishes that the Quran alone is a sufficient and definitive guide in religious matters.

A similar emphasis appears in Surah Yusuf, verse 111: "It was not a narration invented, but a confirmation of what came before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe." In light of these verses, taking other sources as a basis beyond the Quran's guidance, or pushing the Quran's message to the background, directly contradicts the fundamental conditions of faith.

Whether an individual who shapes their religious life according to social traditions, hadiths, or sectarian jurisprudence rather than the Quran truly believes in this clear call of the Quran is a questionable matter. This questioning should be done not with the aim of condemning the person, but with the responsibility of preserving the essence of religion.

Faith Encompasses Not Just the Heart, But All of Life

The principle "you cannot know what is in his heart" is a valuable warning in the context of avoiding individual moral judgments. However, using this principle as an absolute shield of immunity contradicts the Quran's understanding of faith. In the

Quran, faith has not been confined to a mere heartfelt affirmation; it is presented as an integrated reality encompassing words, actions, and way of life. Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 8 and 9, draw attention to this truth: "And of the people are some who say, 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' but they are not believers. They think to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves, and they perceive it not."

These verses indicate that there can be a serious gap between what a person says with their mouth and what they actually live. Therefore, an individual building their life on superstitions, defending beliefs and practices contrary to the Quran's rulings, or attempting to spread them, provides important and noteworthy clues about that person's inner world. Of course, only Allah knows the true state of hearts; however, the Quran does not require us to completely ignore outward signs in this context.

The Matter of Superstition: A Concrete Manifestation of Religious Deviation

In its broadest sense, the concept of superstition refers to false beliefs and practices that contradict the original sources of religion and have become part of social culture over time. Many superstitions that spread throughout Islamic societies over history cover a wide spectrum, from shrine visits to the use of amulets, from various rituals to religious understandings based on fabricated narrations. The Quran has struck at the root of such deviations and warned people clearly. In Surah Al-An'am, verse 116, it is stated: "And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying."

This verse clearly states that the majority's acceptance or the spread of social tradition does not make a practice religiously legitimate. If an individual has devoted their life to spreading and defending superstitions, this situation goes beyond mere lack of knowledge. Because spreading superstitions can mean distancing people from Allah, leading them to false beliefs, and attempting to render the Quran's guidance ineffective. In this dimension, superstition is not merely an individual error, but a serious problem that poisons the religious understanding of society.

Shirk and the Quran's Clear Warnings

One of the Quran's strongest and most repeated warnings concerns shirk (associating partners with Allah). In Surah An-Nisa, verse 48, Allah says: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills." This verse reveals how critically important a subject shirk is in terms of religious responsibility.

Shirk does not only encompass worshipping idols or other gods; delegating Allah's authority to other sources, and advocating that Allah can be reached not only through the Quran but through various intermediaries, rituals, or fabricated teachings, can also be evaluated as an attitude identified with shirk. Within this framework, people who adopt and spread superstitions as religion are, whether they realize it or not, living in a world of belief intertwined with various forms of shirk.

In Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 22, a different dimension is emphasized: "But they say,

'Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following.'" This verse draws attention to the fact that beliefs and practices inherited from ancestors are not a sufficient basis in terms of correctness. The majority of superstitions are based on exactly this foundation — traditions inherited from ancestors and left unquestioned.

The Limits of Husn al-Zann (Presumption of Good Intent)

Husn al-zann, meaning harboring good intentions toward people, is an important part of Islamic ethics. It would be neither right nor appropriate to belittle or consider this value unnecessary. However, applying the principle of husn al-zann without limits and presupposing that any individual acts with good intentions no matter what they do is equally problematic.

While the Quran advises avoiding unjust suspicions, it also places upon Muslims the responsibility of clearly stating religious truths, gently warning against wrongs, and inviting people to the right path. Indeed, in Surah Al-Imran, verse 110, it is stated: "You are the best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah."

Therefore, remaining indifferent to those who openly defend beliefs contrary to the Quran, direct people toward religious deviations, and maintain this as a conscious stance does not represent husn al-zann but rather an escape from responsibility. True husn al-zann should encompass warning someone on the wrong path, showing them the truth, and maintaining courtesy throughout this process.

Justice and Balance in Making Assessments

The matters discussed up to this point are not a justification for condemning an individual from the outset or easily declaring them an unbeliever. On the contrary, they point to the necessity of acting in accordance with the Quran's call for balance and justice. In Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, the following warning is given: "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful."

This balance should be built upon several fundamental principles:

First, outwardly reflected attitudes and behaviors should be evaluated; definitive judgments should not be made about what is hidden in the heart. If a person defends superstitions, this behavior may be subject to criticism; however, making a definitive judgment that this person "has no faith in their heart" is a matter only Allah knows.

Second, the difference between individual error and systematic deception should be observed. There is an important distinction between the person who personally lives a wrong belief and the person who consciously spreads this belief to others and misleads society.

Third, criticism and warning should be done with the intention of revealing the truth and being a means of guidance, not with the aim of stirring up discord.

The Necessity of a Quran-Centered Stance

The principle "you cannot know what is in his heart," when used appropriately, is a valuable moral warning. This principle, which restrains people from hastily judging others, making unjust accusations, and seeing themselves as having the authority to rule over hearts, should be preserved. However, this principle cannot be used as a cover to ignore religious deviations, consider superstitions legitimate, or give religious approval to a way of life contrary to the Quran.

The Quran has placed upon believers the responsibility of thinking, questioning, turning toward truth, and clearly expressing wrongs. Only Allah knows an individual's faith; this truth must never be forgotten. However, the outwardly reflected way of life, the values defended, and the guidance offered to others provide important and noteworthy signs about that person's religious state.

Islam's call is clear: to turn only to Allah, to accept His book as the sole guide, and to live with a pure understanding of tawhid (monotheism) free from superstitions. The attitude to be adopted toward individuals who do not heed this call, and even oppose it, should also be shaped in the light of the Quran's teachings — without abandoning courtesy, yet without concealing the truth either. The path to salvation, both in this world and in the hereafter, lies solely in holding fast to Allah's book and walking upon the straight path He has shown.

The Preservation of the Quran and the Problem of Semantic Distortion: Toward a Quran-Centered Understanding of Islam

One of the fundamental pillars of Islamic belief is the firm conviction that the Holy Quran is a divine book revealed by Allah, preserved, and destined to remain valid until the Day of Judgment. This belief is not merely a religious acceptance but a powerful reality supported by historical, philological, and archaeological evidence. However, the textual preservation of the Quran and the integrity of its meaning at the semantic level are two separate matters. Throughout history, while the physical text of the Quran has been meticulously safeguarded, its message has been overshadowed by various political, cultural, and social factors; fabricated narrations, sectarian interpretations, and traditional practices have at times been placed ahead of the word of Allah. Here, we will examine the preservation of the Quran from both a faith-based and scientific perspective, while also discussing the problem of semantic distortion, the issue of hadith, and the necessity of a Quran-centered understanding of Islam.

The Divine Guarantee of the Quran: Surah Al-Hijr, Verse 9

The matter of the Quran's preservation rests directly upon a promise from Allah. In verse 9 of Surah Al-Hijr, this promise is expressed in clear terms:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its guardian."

This verse is remarkably significant on several levels. First and foremost, Allah personally takes the Quran under His protection. This guarantee — resting not on any human community, institution, or state, but directly on divine will — elevates the

question of the Quran's preservation beyond historical and human factors. Second, the word "Reminder" (Dhikr) used in the verse indicates that the Quran is not merely a text but a living and active divine message. In this context, Allah's promise encompasses the preservation not only of the Quran's letters but of its essence and message as well. Yet this protection does not automatically validate every human effort at understanding and interpretation; rather, it places upon every Muslim an individual responsibility to return to the Quran and understand it correctly.

The Fate of Previous Scriptures and the Quran

To better understand the preservation of the Quran, it is illuminating to look at the historical journey of earlier divine scriptures. The Torah and the Gospel are undoubtedly sacred texts carrying the word of Allah. However, these books were subject to serious semantic distortions under various social and political pressures throughout history. According to Islamic belief, Allah did not permit the actual texts of these books to be corrupted; but humans misinterpreted them, transmitted them in distorted ways, and used them to serve their own interests. As a result, irreconcilable differences of opinion arose among communities and religious understanding became fragmented. Unfortunately, the Quran has faced the same process. While remaining unchanged as a text, humans have misinterpreted it, produced flawed translations, transmitted its verses in distorted ways, and exploited it for personal gain.

The Preservation of the Quran Through Historical and Scientific Evidence

The textual preservation of the Quran is supported by concrete historical documentation that goes far beyond an abstract claim of faith. Among the most striking findings in this field are the Quran pages found at the University of Birmingham. Carbon-dated to between 568–645 CE, these pages show that they are nearly contemporaneous with the period of revelation and demonstrate complete consistency with the Quran text in our hands today. In addition, many historical manuscripts provide strong evidence for the Quran's preservation. The Topkapi Palace Manuscript bears early calligraphic features reflecting the Hijazi writing tradition and represents a scribal tradition belonging to the first Muslim generations. The manuscript found in Tashkent, Uzbekistan is associated with the copies reproduced during the time of Uthman and has been carefully examined by historians. The Sana'a manuscripts in Yemen are also extremely important documents: while containing some phonetic differences, they fundamentally correspond to the existing Quran text, demonstrating its historical consistency. All of these documents, despite appearing in different geographies and independently of one another, show no significant divergence in the Quranic text. This finding strongly confirms the Quran's preservation both from the perspective of faith and of historical science.

Differences in Recitation (Qira'at): Unity Within Diversity

An important issue to address in the context of the Quran's preservation is the differences in recitation (qira'at). At the time the Quran was revealed, multiple dialects and phonetic traditions existed across the Arabian Peninsula. This reality laid the groundwork for various recitation forms to develop, enabling the Quran to be

more easily learned and recited by Muslims across different regions. These recitation differences do not in any way mean that contradictory copies of the Quranic text exist; rather, they reflect phonetic and pronunciation variations adapted to different Arabic dialects. Today, the most widespread recitation is the Hafs narration of the Asim recitation, dominant particularly in the Middle East and the Arab world. In North and West Africa, the Warsh narration of the Nafi recitation is more prevalent. Other lesser-known recitations also exist in various parts of the world. However, none of these recitations produce any change in the fundamental meaning and message of the Quran. Recitation differences should be viewed as a functional diversity that has enabled the Quran to reach a broader audience across various regions and communities. This situation is evidence both that the Quran carries a universal message and that it is preserved on a firm and reliable foundation.

Semantic Distortion: The Issue of Hadith

While the textual preservation of the Quran is beyond dispute, it has been subjected to various interventions at the semantic level throughout history. The primary instrument of these interventions has been hadiths — the transmissions of words and actions attributed to our Prophet Muhammad. All hadiths were fabricated after the death of our Prophet Muhammad and transmitted through oral tradition; their being committed to writing occurred only after a lengthy process. It is now accepted by historians that during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods in particular, a great number of hadiths were fabricated to strengthen the legitimacy of political authority, weaken rival factions, or reinforce specific ideological positions. Hadith scholarship developed rudimentary methods such as isnad and textual criticism to address this problem, but these proved practically ineffective. An even more critical problem is that even some hadiths considered authentic have been allowed to exert a decisive influence over Quranic rulings — even being claimed to abrogate them. The understanding that a Quranic verse can be invalidated by a later attributed oral narration is in clear contradiction with the belief in the completeness and sufficiency of the Quran. Over time, this understanding led to the formation of a religious mindset that reduced the Quran to a secondary position not only theoretically but also practically and legally. Indeed, in many Muslim communities, daily religious practices and legal decisions are drawn not from the Quran but from a multi-layered tradition of narrations.

Traditional Religion Superseding the Quran

One of the deepest ruptures observed throughout Islamic history is the gradual replacement of a Quran-centered religious understanding with a narration-centered traditional structure. This transformation did not occur at a single moment or through a conscious decision; rather, it was shaped gradually over centuries and deepened as sectarian traditions, schools of jurisprudence, and Sufi orders became institutionalized structures. During this process, some Islamic scholars drew attention to the dangers of narration-based religion by defending the sufficiency of the Quran. Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi school, foregrounded the Quran's fundamental guidance and adopted a methodology that gave priority to reason and the Quran in legal derivation. The Andalusian scholar al-Shatibi, in his comprehensive

analyses of the principles of religion, called for a return to the essence of the Quran's message. Ibn Hazm, the pioneer of the Zahiri school, sharply criticized blind imitation (taqlid) and argued that Muslims should base themselves directly on the Quran rather than narrations. In the modern era, Quran-centered thinkers have sought to build upon this legacy and bring a systematic Quran-focused understanding of Islam to wider audiences. However, these voices have often remained in the minority against the power of the dominant religious tradition and have been regarded as marginal. The majority embraced the narration tradition as an inseparable part of Islam, viewing the approach of seeing the Quran alone as a sufficient guide as incomplete or deviant.

Return-to-Quran Movements in the Modern Era

Particularly from the second half of the 19th century onward, a profound search for renewal began to emerge in the Islamic world. This search, triggered by the identity crisis brought by colonialism, the questioning of traditional structures, and modernization processes, gave rise to many different currents. Among these currents, the one that draws particular attention is the "return to the Quran" movement, which places the Quran at its center as the sole and sufficient guide of Islam. This movement adopts a methodology built not on reducing the Quran to a ritual reading practice, but on understanding it and applying it to daily life. Rather than blind imitation and unquestioning obedience inherited from ancestors, it foregrounds each Muslim's personal engagement with the Quran and individual intellectual effort to reach its message. It also advocates reading and understanding the Quran directly, without filtering it through the frameworks of particular sects, cultures, or traditions. This approach has many significant advantages. First and foremost, it positions Muslims as direct agents rather than indirect transmitters of their religious understanding. It also presents Islam within a universal framework capable of adapting to various geographies and cultures, and opens the path to overcoming unnecessary conflicts generated by sectarian divisions.

The Question of the Quran's Sufficiency

The question "Is the Quran sufficient on its own?" constitutes one of the deepest debates in the history of Islamic thought. The answer given to this question directly determines how a Muslim will shape their religious life. The Quran defines itself as "a detailed explanation of all things" (Surah Yusuf, 111) and "a guide to righteousness" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2). These expressions reveal a strong internal consistency regarding the Quran's own claim to sufficiency. Over the centuries, this choice has largely been shaped in favor of the narration tradition, while the Quran has been turned into a source whose sufficiency is accepted in theory but reduced to a secondary position in practice.

The Role of Hypocrites and Deliberate Distortion Attempts

When evaluating the semantic corruptions of the Quran, the actors who consciously contributed to this corruption throughout history must not be overlooked. The Quran itself repeatedly emphasizes hypocrites — those who are outwardly Muslim but inwardly opposed to Islam — as the most dangerous internal element within the

Muslim community. It is known that from the earliest periods of Islamic history, this group attempted to infiltrate Muslim communities and undermine Islam from within. In this context, the assessment that fabricated hadiths represent a deliberate strategy aimed at changing Islam at a religious level — far beyond mere political calculations — cannot be ignored. Hadiths that contradict the rulings Allah has revealed solely in the Quran, or that position our Prophet Muhammad as an independent lawgiver apart from divine revelation, carry the concrete traces of this deliberate distortion attempt. The Quran continuously invites Muslims to be vigilant against such distortions and commands them to return to the Book of Allah in every matter.

Toward a Quran-Centered Understanding of Islam

In light of all these considerations, the construction of a Quran-centered understanding of Islam for today's Muslims appears both inevitable and necessary. This understanding must be built upon certain fundamental principles. First and foremost, the principle of the Quran's sufficiency is indispensable — the Quran must be the sole reference point. Second, active Quranic comprehension must be foregrounded: the Quran should be read not merely for ritual recitation but with the intention of understanding, comprehending, and applying it to life. Third, sectarian and cultural biases must be abandoned — the Quran should be read not through the frameworks of particular sects, cultures, or traditions, but through its own internal logic and holistic language. Finally, a universal perspective must be embraced: never forgetting that the Quran's message addresses all of humanity, this message must be grounded not in a narrow and exclusionary identity politics but in a universal understanding of justice, compassion, and monotheism (tawhid).

The Quran has reached us today in uncorrupted form as a text, in light of both its divine promise of protection and historical documentation. This is one of Islam's greatest foundations and is a source of deep gratitude and responsibility for Muslims. However, the preservation of the text does not automatically guarantee the integrity of its meaning. History has painfully demonstrated how the message of the Quran can be overshadowed, distorted, and pushed into the background. For this book — under Allah's protection — to find its rightful place is the product of the effort and will that Muslims demonstrate at both the individual and societal level. This effort means understanding the Quran, engaging with it directly, carrying it into every sphere of life, and abandoning blind attachment to all narrations, sects, or traditions outside of it. The Quran is the greatest divine gift presented to humanity. The most meaningful and profound respect that can be shown to it is not merely to recite it, but to understand it and to live by it.

Combat Sports and Islamic Ethics

Modern combat sports — UFC, boxing, and similar organizations — have gained enormous popularity, becoming a multi-billion dollar industry that has also captured Muslim communities. But does this enthusiasm genuinely align with Islam's foundational civilizational principles and moral framework? A society's future is shaped by what it values and where it directs its youth.

The Value of the Human Body and the Limits of Combat

Islam defines the human body as a trust (amanah) — not merely a personal possession, but a divine responsibility. Intentionally harming one's own body, or striving to harm another's, directly contradicts this principle. Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:32) expresses the sanctity of human life with extraordinary force: killing one person unjustly is likened to killing all of humanity, while saving one life is equated with saving all of humanity. This principle elevates not only the taking of life but every deliberate act of harm against a person to the level of moral concern.

At its core, combat sport aims to physically incapacitate an opponent. Concussions, brain damage, permanent disability, and even death are documented risks. This creates direct tension with Islam's principle of protecting life — hifz al-nafs. It should be noted that Islamic scholars have generally permitted combat training undertaken for self-defense and individual exercise. The real debate centers on the transformation of these disciplines into a professional entertainment industry, the presentation of violence as performance, and the deliberate exposure of participants to serious injury. There is a vast difference between something being permissible and something being embraced as a civilizational priority.

Cultural Identity and the Risk of Alienation

The global rise of combat sports is no accident. These sports are products of a popular culture consciously shaped by Western-centric media and entertainment industries — platforms that glorify power, aggression, and individual dominance, sustained by billions of dollars in advertising, sponsorships, and broadcasting deals. Muslim communities' attraction to this cultural current is not merely a sporting preference; it is a sign of deeper cultural transformation.

Looking at the historical legacy of Islamic civilization, it is clear that its strength never derived from physical dominance alone. The intellectual centers of the Abbasid era, the scientific and philosophical traditions of Andalusia, the legal and administrative sophistication of the Ottomans — all were grounded in knowledge, wisdom, and discernment. At their peak, Muslim thinkers contributed to humanity's shared treasury of knowledge across mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and philosophy.

Today, a significant portion of Muslim youth energy and attention appears directed toward fighting arenas and sports screens rather than reviving this profound civilizational heritage. This shift is a concrete reflection of Western civilization's cultural hegemony over Muslim societies. A society is defined by what it admires. A society that borrows its objects of admiration from another culture slowly erodes its own identity.

The Intellectual Power Vacuum and Strategic Danger

The most critical dimension of evaluating interest in combat sports from a civilizational perspective is: at the expense of what priorities? Today, more than seven thousand think tanks operate in the United States alone, producing strategic

analyses, policy recommendations, and future projections across dozens of fields — from economics and defense to education and cultural policy. Across the entire Muslim world, such institutional structures are severely limited in number.

This picture reflects not merely an organizational deficiency, but a deeper crisis of mindset. Wars are no longer fought with weapons alone — they are waged through knowledge, economics, culture, and technology. A society unable to manage inflation, produce scientists, generate technology, or anticipate demographic and environmental shifts cannot arrest its own decline, regardless of how much physical strength and courage it possesses.

Surah Al-Anfal (8:60) commands Muslims to prepare strength — but at its heart lies deterrence and balance, not aggression or displays of violence. Moreover, this strength encompasses not only physical capacity but every form of superiority rooted in knowledge, technology, and strategic foresight. From this perspective, the "power" the Muslim world most urgently needs today is not what is displayed in fighting rings, but what is produced in research centers, universities, and think tanks.

Balancing Physical and Intellectual Discipline

An important distinction must be made here: physical health, endurance, and bodily discipline are valuable and encouraged within Islam. The objection is not to physical exercise itself — it is to the misalignment of priorities.

It is healthy and beneficial for a young Muslim to exercise for a few hours each day. But when that same young person spends dozens of hours watching combat videos, following fighters, and immersing themselves in that culture — while failing to dedicate serious time and energy to seeking knowledge, solving social problems, or developing professional competence — that represents a civilizational loss.

Education is the most concrete reflection of a society's collective priorities. Muslim communities will be defined by what they direct their youth toward: a culture of learning that produces scientists, engineers, thinkers, and strategists — or a generation swept away by popular culture's appeal, drifting from its core responsibilities. The answer depends not only on individual choices but on social structures and educational reform.

The Path to Rebuilding Islamic Civilization

The greatest challenge facing Muslim communities today is fragmentation and a lack of vision. Meeting this challenge requires the realization of several core priorities.

First, intellectual infrastructure must be strengthened. The Muslim world urgently needs independent think tanks, research centers, and shared academic networks — institutions that are productive not only in religious or political domains, but in economic, technological, and cultural fields as well.

Second, educational reform is unavoidable. Muslim educational systems must move away from rote memorization and toward models that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical competence. Young people must be equipped not only

with religious knowledge but with an interdisciplinary mode of thought.

Third, a shared civilizational vision must be constructed. The Muslim world must find a foundation of civilizational solidarity that transcends political divisions — one grounded not only in religious identity, but in shared historical heritage, common values, and a collective responsibility toward the future.

Finally, a critical perspective toward popular culture must be developed. Rather than consuming what Western-centric media and entertainment industries offer without question, Muslims should embrace and produce their own cultural values as frameworks of content and meaning.

The question of combat sports may appear, on the surface, to be a simple matter of sporting preference. But at its core it carries a far deeper question: Where are Muslim individuals and communities directing their energy and attention?

Islam commands that struggle be waged not through physical force alone, but through knowledge, ethics, and wisdom. Realizing this understanding requires a goal far more difficult — and far more precious — than debating combat sports: the rebuilding of Islamic civilization on the axes of knowledge, enlightenment, and justice.

The most valuable legacy one can leave to the young is not a fighting technique or a championship title, but the capacity to understand the world, solve its problems, and contribute to humanity. The body should be strong, yes — but first the mind must be illuminated, then the will must be steeled, and ultimately this wholeness must serve the collective ascent of society.

The real challenge facing Muslims is not in the ring. It is in the councils of learning, the research centers, and the design of the future.

Was Our Prophet Muhammad Illiterate? A Quran-Centered Evaluation

One of the most debated issues in Islamic history is the question of whether the Prophet Muhammad could read and write. The traditional Islamic understanding has maintained that he was completely illiterate both before and after revelation, grounding this view primarily in hadith narrations and a particular interpretation of the word "ummi." However, when the Quran is examined within its own internal coherence and compared against historical data, this claim must be seriously questioned.

The Word "Ummi" in the Quran

When the verses containing the word "ummi" are examined, it becomes clear that the Quran consistently uses this term to describe communities that remained distant from the culture of revelation and from divine scriptures such as the Torah and the Gospel.

In Surah Al-Imran 3:20, it is stated: "And say to those who were given the Scripture and to the unlettered ones..." In this verse, "ummi" is used in explicit contrast to "those given the Scripture" — that is, the People of the Book. If "ummi" referred solely

to those who could not read or write, this contrast would lose its logical foundation, since literacy and possession of the Torah or Gospel are entirely independent qualities.

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:78 clarifies this context further: "And among them are ummis who do not know the Scripture except wishful thinking, and they only assume." Here, "not knowing the Scripture" and being "ummi" are used synonymously. The term describes someone unaware of the tradition of revelation and the culture of divine scripture — it has no direct connection to literacy.

Surah Al-Imran 3:75 adds yet another dimension: "That is because they say, 'There is no blame on us concerning the ummis.'" Here, the condescending attitude of the Jews toward communities outside their own religious and cultural sphere is conveyed. "Ummis" refers to peoples who did not carry the heritage of revelation. In this context, it is clear that the concept relates not to literacy but to a distinction of religious identity and tradition.

Taken together, all of these verses show that the Quran uses the concept of "ummi" within a consistent semantic framework: communities that remained distant from revelation, from the culture of divine scripture, and from the prophets. The polytheists of Mecca perfectly fit this definition — they came from a society that did not know the Torah or the Gospel and carried no heritage of revelation. Therefore, the characterization of the Prophet Muhammad as an "ummi" prophet expresses that he came from such a background; it says nothing about whether he could read or write.

Surah Al-Ankabut 48: A Misinterpreted Evidence

The verse most frequently cited by the traditionalist understanding to argue that the Prophet Muhammad was illiterate is Surah Al-Ankabut 29:48:

"You did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had cause for doubt."

When the context of this verse is carefully examined, it becomes apparent that the "scripture" referred to is not the Quran but rather the earlier revelations — particularly the Torah and the Gospel. The verse emphasizes that before the Quran was revealed, the Prophet Muhammad had no engagement whatsoever with these books. Had such engagement existed, it would have provided a significant pretext for those who approached the divine source of the Quran with suspicion.

The primary function of the verse is not to support a claim of miraculous illiteracy, but to certify the authenticity of the prophetic mission. The Prophet Muhammad was not someone who had read, studied, and drawn upon previous scriptures; revelation came to him through an entirely new and independent channel. This is precisely what the verse is saying. To derive from it the conclusion that he was illiterate in the general sense is to stretch the scope of the text far beyond its actual reach.

Historical and Logical Evidence

His Life in Trade and Practical Necessities

From his early youth, the Prophet Muhammad grew up immersed in commerce; according to hadith, he managed Khadijah's caravans and gained experience on international trade routes. In an environment where written contracts, accounting records, and commercial documents were used, literacy was a practical necessity. To argue that someone without reading and writing skills could conduct trade at this level is incompatible with the economic realities of the era.

The Treaty of Hudaybiyyah

According to a narration found even in classical Islamic historical sources, during the negotiations of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the Prophet Muhammad asked Ali — who was writing the treaty — to erase the phrase "Messenger of God." When Ali refused to do so, the Prophet himself reportedly took the pen, erased the relevant phrase, and wrote his own name in its place. This narration appears in traditionalist literature as well, and directly demonstrates that the Prophet Muhammad knew how to read and write. The inconsistency in how the traditionalist interpretation evaluates this narration constitutes one of the most sensitive points of the issue.

The Cultural and Intellectual Climate of the Era

The Prophet Muhammad was raised in a culturally vibrant environment of the pre-Islamic age. The Mu'allaqat poems were hung on the walls of the Kaaba; written literature and poetic tradition were at their peak across the Arabian Peninsula. Mecca was not only a religious but also an important commercial and cultural center. To claim that someone who lived in such an environment and actively participated in commercial life was entirely devoid of literacy contradicts historical reality.

His Correction of Scribes' Errors

According to narrations transmitted even within the traditionalist tradition, the Prophet Muhammad noticed and corrected errors made by his scribes of revelation. Errors detectable after the written text was subsequently read back to him differ from errors that could be caught by personally reading the writing. The fact that these narrations imply he visually inspected the text brings the matter of literacy back to the fore once again.

The Prisoners of Badr and the Value of Literacy

It is narrated that after the Battle of Badr, some prisoners were released in exchange for teaching Muslims to read and write. This practice clearly reflects the high value the Prophet Muhammad placed on literacy. But why would someone who could not read or write place such great value on this skill? The answer to this question suggests that the Prophet Muhammad was personally acquainted with literacy.

The Quran's Command "Read" and Surah Al-Qalam

The very first verse revealed of the Quran is deeply significant: "Read in the name of your Lord who created." (Surah Al-Alaq, 96:1) This command is addressed to its first recipient. If that recipient was someone who had never learned to read and write — and who would remain so — what is the practical dimension of this command?

The opening of Surah Al-Qalam is equally striking: "Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe." (Al-Qalam 68:1) This verse, which places the pen and writing at the center of the Quran's fundamental conceptual vocabulary, symbolizes the high value accorded to writing. To what extent is it consistent with this framework that the Prophet Muhammad — the bearer of the divine message — remained entirely removed from reading and writing, both personally and socially?

Surah Sad 29:38 states: "A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, so that they might reflect upon its verses, and that those of understanding would be reminded." The Quran is a book that places reason and contemplation at its center. That the first recipient of this book was deprived of so fundamental an intellectual tool as literacy appears to be in tension with the Quran's own internal logic.

Internal Contradictions of the Traditional Interpretation

The traditionalist view's insistence that the Prophet Muhammad could not read or write contains significant internal contradictions. On one hand, there are narrations reporting that he corrected the errors of revelation scribes and personally wrote at Hudaybiyyah; on the other, the same narrative tradition stubbornly maintains that he was illiterate. The tension created by this contradiction should be evaluated as an inconsistency within the hadith tradition itself.

Furthermore, the traditionalist approach presents the Prophet Muhammad's illiteracy almost as a virtue and proof of miracle — as if literacy would have constituted an obstacle to his claim of prophethood, implying that he could have fabricated the Quran had he been literate. Yet this interpretation both diminishes the Prophet Muhammad's intellectual capacity and reduces the divine source of the Quran to a superficial miracle narrative, rather than seeking it on a far more substantive foundation independent of literacy.

Conclusions of a Quran-Centered Evaluation

The Quran's own text uses the concept of "ummi" within a specific and consistent semantic framework: communities distant from the tradition of revelation and unaware of the culture of divine scripture. Describing the Prophet Muhammad as an "ummi" prophet expresses that he came from such a community; it does not render a verdict on his literacy status.

When the historical evidence, the cultural climate of the era, the Prophet Muhammad's life in trade, the Hudaybiyyah Treaty narration, and the accounts regarding revelation scribes are all evaluated together, the evidence pointing to his literacy is extremely compelling. Moreover, the fact that the Quran's very first command was "Read," and that it foregrounds the pen as a symbol, makes it difficult to argue that the first person addressed by this command remained entirely removed from literacy.

The claim that the Prophet Muhammad was illiterate is supported neither by the Quran's own expressive integrity nor by historical facts. It rests largely on a decontextualized and erroneous interpretation of the word "ummi," and reflects a

particular religious concern that took shape within certain segments of the hadith tradition.

A Quran-centered approach characterizes the Prophet Muhammad as "ummi" not because he could not read or write, but because he came from a community not previously engaged with the tradition of revelation. This distinction, though it may appear subtle, produces far-reaching consequences for the understanding of Islam.

A religious understanding grounded in the Quran allows us to define the Prophet Muhammad as the conscious and fully equipped bearer of a divine message that valued literacy, accorded importance to writing, and placed knowledge and reason at its center. Let us close with the invitation of Surah Sad: the Quran was revealed so that we might reflect upon its verses and reason carefully. To respond to this call requires proceeding not from tradition, but from revelation itself.

The Commodification of Sexuality in the Modern Age

The Quran, in verse 43 of Surah Al-Furqan, poses a profound question to humanity: "Have you seen the one who takes his own desires as his god?" This verse describes not merely an individual weakness, but a systemized perversion. In the modern age, this perversion is no longer individual; it has taken on an institutional, industrial, and global dimension. The most vulnerable points of the human soul have been meticulously converted into commercially calculated models, and in this process, moral, spiritual, and human values have been eliminated one by one.

The Industrial Transformation of Sexuality

Throughout history, sexuality has been regarded by the vast majority of societies as a private domain. The institution of marriage assumed not only a religious but also a sociological, psychological, and biological function — sustaining the continuation of lineage, family warmth, and social order. However, beginning in the second half of the 20th century, particularly with the cultural revolutions in the West, this understanding was fundamentally shaken.

Today, the industry built upon sexual exploitation has reached an economic scale exceeding 15 billion dollars annually worldwide. Behind this figure lies not merely a market size, but the systematic destruction of human values, privacy, and moral boundaries. It is estimated that more than 2.5 million people are employed in this sector — a figure that reveals how deeply structural this problem has become.

What is most troubling is that this industry sustains itself by targeting the most vulnerable aspects of human psychology. Addiction mechanisms, loneliness, identity crises, and the search for meaning have become the raw materials of this sector. The modern individual is, without realizing it, made into a consumer of their own weakness.

The Turkish Example: The Moral Reflections of Legal Contradiction

Turkey occupies an interesting and contradictory position on this matter. On one hand, prostitution is legally defined as a crime; on the other, the state collects tax

revenue from this sector and offers social security coverage to its workers. This represents not merely a legal inconsistency, but a sign of deep moral fracture.

If a state labels an act as criminal while simultaneously profiting from that same act, the legitimacy of such a system must be seriously questioned. From an Islamic perspective, state revenue nourished by what is forbidden cannot offer any blessed contribution to society. Indeed, Islam opens to debate not only forbidden acts themselves, but also the legitimacy of income derived from those acts. Turkey's example concretely illustrates how the modern state, when stripped of a moral framework, falls into a paradoxical position.

The Matter of Normalizing Homosexuality

For most of history, homosexual relations have been considered unacceptable both by religious and traditional social norms. Beyond the religious basis of this stance, it can be said to rest upon a universal intuition regarding human nature and the continuation of lineage. Yet particularly in the 21st century, a process that practically reverses this stance is underway.

The legal recognition of same-sex marriage in the West, the systematic romanticization of homosexual relationships in media and cinema, and the incorporation of sexual identity concepts into educational curricula — all of these can be evaluated as parts of a far more comprehensive transformation project. The homosexual characters inserted into nearly every narrative in television series and films are not an incidental reflection; they are the product of a deliberate cultural construction.

Islam's position on this matter is entirely clear. God created humanity in pairs, made man and woman complementary to one another, and endowed the institution of marriage with both worldly and transcendent sanctity. The Quran recounts the history of the people of Lot repeatedly as a cautionary example. What draws attention in this narrative is not merely a moral sanction, but a profound warning about the fundamental destabilization of social structure.

To view homosexuality solely as a religious matter is insufficient; the issue equally concerns the future of the family institution, the continuation of lineage, and social coherence.

The Deepest Wound: The Sexual Exploitation of Children

Among all these realities, the most severe and most searing is the matter of child sexual abuse. It is known that "sex tourism" operations organized from developed Western nations — primarily in Europe and America — to South and Southeast Asia involve the commodification of children between the ages of 6 and 12. This tragic picture is not voiced loudly enough in the international arena.

International organizations such as UNICEF continue to operate; human rights groups produce reports. Yet because the great majority of these children come from impoverished families, they fail to genuinely enter the agenda of the international community. The sensitivity the West displays regarding individual rights within its

own borders diminishes dramatically when those borders — geographic and economic — are crossed. This double standard is more than a subject of political critique; it is the declaration of a profound moral bankruptcy.

Islam defines the child not merely in legal terms, but as a spiritual and social trust. To harm a child is to betray this trust. The compassion shown to children by our Prophet Muhammad, and the principles he set forth for their protection, form the foundation of Islamic civilization's child-centered moral understanding. Yet many actors in the modern world have turned this trust into capital.

The Concrete Reflections of Social Destruction

The social cost of severing sexuality from its moral boundaries extends far beyond an abstract ethical debate. The data points to this picture producing concrete and measurable consequences:

In developed Western nations, divorce rates continue to rise, the family institution is significantly weakening, and cases of loneliness and depression are increasing. Sexually transmitted diseases, particularly among young populations, have reached alarming levels. Pornography addiction is now addressed as a separate category in mental health literature. Research increasingly indicates that a significant proportion of young men are experiencing a diminished capacity for forming real relationships.

All of this reveals that the lifestyles presented under the name of freedom do not offer genuine freedom to individuals — quite the contrary, they create new and deeper forms of enslavement. The framework envisioned by Islam, in this sense, is not a restriction but rather a protective shield. Boundaries do not imprison people; they protect people from themselves and from others.

Islam's Solution Perspective

Islam approaches these matters not with the language of abstract preaching, but with a concrete, applicable system of solutions that penetrates every domain of life.

The Central Position of Marriage and Privacy: In Islam, sexuality within the bounds of marriage is permissible. This relationship between spouses is treated as the physical manifestation of a spiritual bond — which removes sexuality from the realm of commodity and places it within a world of meaning. An understanding that defines sexuality solely on the axis of pleasure ultimately condemns the individual to meaninglessness and dissatisfaction. A union within the bounds of marriage, however, framed by responsibility, commitment, and spirituality, offers genuine stability to both the individual and society.

Education and Awareness: Raising the consciousness of young people against the perception of sexuality constructed by the media is one of the most urgent needs of the age. Islamic education, in this regard, must convey to young people not only the prohibitions, but also the wisdom behind the boundaries. When a young person understands why something is forbidden, they internalize that prohibition not as a rule, but as a virtue.

State Policies: When states legitimize the revenues derived from the prostitution and pornography sectors, they bring about not the solution to the problem, but its deepening. The Islamic understanding of governance positions the state not merely as a legal actor, but equally as a moral one. Within this framework, an economic model nourished by the forbidden has no sustainability.

Social Oversight in Media: A social awareness and critical perspective must be developed against content designed to legitimize deviancy. This is not solely a matter of censorship; it is a reflex of cultural self-defense. The right of societies to protect their own values, though marginalized in modern discourse, is a legitimate and universal right.

Return to Human Nature

The promise of freedom offered to humanity by the modern world is, to a great extent, an illusion. For true freedom is not the pursuit of unlimited desire; it is knowing one's soul, recognizing one's weaknesses, and with that knowledge, turning toward a higher will. Islam is a system that liberates humanity in this sense.

Verse 43 of Surah Al-Furqan gives us the diagnosis of the spirit of the age, and equally signals the direction of its cure. History has repeatedly shown that a civilization that deifies desire will inevitably consume itself. This warning, extending from the people of Lot to the present day, is not merely a religious reminder, but a profound lesson concerning the lifespan of civilizations.

The salvation of the individual and of society lies concealed in the return to human nature. The boundaries set by God do not offer humanity a prison — they offer a refuge. Safeguarding this refuge is the foundation of happiness in both this world and the next.

Error and Repentance: The Dimension of Wisdom in Mistakes According to Islamic Ethics

The Destructive Perception of Mistake in the Jahiliyyah Mentality

Human beings have been endowed, from the very first moment of their earthly existence, with the potential to make mistakes. This is not evidence of their weakness; on the contrary, it is the clearest sign that they are beings subject to trial, possessed of free will, and capable of bearing responsibility. Making mistakes is a reality embedded in human nature, and this reality has been interpreted in vastly different ways across different societies. While the jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) mentality regards mistakes as a source of shame, a stain, and a social catastrophe, Quranic ethics approaches the matter from an entirely different perspective. Within the framework that Islam offers, a mistake is a concrete expression of humanity's need for Allah, a divine invitation that opens the door to repentance, and one of the most valuable lessons in the believer's journey toward maturity.

The Destructive Perception of Mistake in the Jahiliyyah Mentality

The concept of jahiliyyah does not refer solely to pre-Islamic Arab society; rather, it

describes the fundamental mindset of any society that has turned away from the light of revelation. This mentality ties honor and worth to external achievements, power, and social perception. A mistake, within this system, is seen as something that demolishes the image a person has constructed, damages their reputation, and pushes them to the margins of the social hierarchy.

In jahiliyyah societies, the individual who makes a mistake becomes the target of collective judgment. Others' mistakes are mocked, their weaknesses exposed, their flaws magnified. In such an environment, people become afraid of making mistakes — but this fear is not a simple precaution. It transforms into a deep anxiety that gnaws at the soul and crushes the individual under the constant pressure of perfectionism.

The consequences of this anxiety are deeply destructive. The fear of making mistakes erodes a person's courage to try new things. The individual gives up on attempting anything in order to avoid failure. The learning process is disrupted, because at the heart of learning lies the act of erring, correcting, and trying again. Thus the jahiliyyah mentality's merciless stance toward mistakes, ironically, leads to a vicious cycle that stunts the very development of society.

Beyond this, the mentality condemns the individual to a kind of inner paralysis. Admitting a mistake feels difficult, because admission means confessing weakness — and that confession, in turn, means social punishment and exclusion. For this reason, individuals tend to conceal their mistakes, shift blame onto others, or deny them altogether. No genuine confrontation or transformation takes place; only the anxiety of saving appearances prevails. Consequently, the jahiliyyah mentality, far from eliminating mistakes, builds a vicious cycle that deepens them further.

The Ontological Status of Mistake in Quranic Ethics

Islam's view of the human being differs fundamentally from the jahiliyyah mentality. The Holy Quran explicitly declares that Allah created humanity weak (an-Nisa, 28) — and this declaration is not a rebuke, but a divine statement regarding the nature of the human being. The human is imperfect, fallible, forgetful, and susceptible to the deceptions of the ego. This reality does not diminish one's worth; on the contrary, it is a foundational truth that renders humanity in need of Allah's infinite mercy and enables people to live with an awareness of that need.

Making mistakes is a universal reality of human existence; what truly matters is the attitude adopted after the mistake. The measure is not whether one avoids error, but what path one takes after erring. This perspective opens an immense space of psychological freedom for the human being. A mistake is no longer a final verdict that determines one's worth, but rather an inseparable part of the process of growth and maturity. What matters is recognizing the mistake, accepting it, and making a sincere effort to make amends. This awareness makes a person both more courageous and more humble.

The Transformative Power of Repentance

In Quranic ethics, the most defining dimension of a mistake is that it is seen as a means of opening the door to repentance (tawbah). When the believer who has erred becomes aware of what they have done, their heart constricts and their conscience aches — yet this ache does not break them; rather, it turns them toward Allah. For the believer knows that Allah loves those who repent (al-Baqarah, 222) and believes that only He forgives sins (az-Zumar, 53).

Repentance is not merely a verbal expression of regret. The repentance described by the Quran is tawbah nasuh — a sincere and resolute repentance that rebuilds the person from within, genuinely transforms them, and enables them to truly reckon with their past. In this process, the believer first sees and accepts their mistake clearly, then feels genuine remorse for what they have done, and finally opens a new page with firm resolve not to repeat the same error.

The contribution of this process to the believer's inner life is profound and lasting. Above all, their bond with Allah is strengthened. Through their mistake, the servant comes to recognize their own helplessness, and this recognition purifies them of arrogance. A heart purged of arrogance opens itself more fully to Allah's mercy. At the same time, the process of repentance enables the believer to know their own soul more deeply — to recognize in which circumstances they are most vulnerable and which weaknesses tend to surface — and this self-awareness matures their conduct in the times ahead.

The Social Dimension: The Believer's View of Others' Mistakes

Quranic ethics fundamentally shapes not only one's attitude toward one's own mistakes, but also one's stance toward the mistakes of others. When a believer witnesses a fellow believer's error, they do not move to expose, humiliate, or socially exclude them. On the contrary, they approach them with compassion and mercy.

At the root of this lies a deep empathy: when the believer looks at another's mistake, they also see their own weakness. They approach with the awareness that "this mistake could have been mine," and this awareness replaces arrogance with humility, judgment with compassion.

This approach lays the groundwork for building a climate of trust and mercy within society. A community in which people are not afraid to admit their mistakes, to ask for help, and to live through their processes of transformation openly will be far healthier and more dynamic than one in which every person feels compelled to constantly conceal themselves, protect their image, and erect walls of self-defense.

The Belief in Destiny and the Dimension of Wisdom in Mistakes

Another fundamental element that adds depth to Islam's understanding of error is the belief in divine destiny (qadar). The believer holds that Allah has created all things with wisdom, that there is no place for coincidence in the universe, and that every event is part of a divine plan. This belief directly shapes the believer's attitude toward mistakes as well.

A mistake is no longer a mere failure — it is an experience that carries meaning

within the framework of divine destiny. When Allah permits a servant to err, it is so that the servant may attain, through that experience, a deeper maturity, a stronger faith, and a more genuine surrender to His will. This awareness carries the believer not into panic or despair, but into a climate of reflection and trust in Allah (tawakkul).

The Quranic principle that "with hardship comes ease" acquires a profound meaning in this context. Within the mistake, too, there is ease, an opening, a seed of good. The believer learns to turn their gaze not merely to the mistake itself, but to the possibilities that lie beyond it. This perspective makes it possible to experience life not as a meaningless chaos, but as a meaningful journey in every detail of which divine wisdom is manifest.

Mistake and Human Development: A Psychological and Spiritual Assessment

Modern psychology, too, demonstrates that mistakes are an indispensable element of human development. When learning processes are examined, it becomes clear that genuine and lasting learning occurs largely through the mistakes that are made. A mistake is a critical feedback mechanism that reveals the inadequacy of one's current understanding and opens the door to new comprehension. Islam grasped this truth centuries ago and endowed it with a spiritual dimension.

The believer's attitude toward mistakes lays the groundwork not only for their cognitive growth, but also for their moral and spiritual flourishing. While the lesson drawn from a mistake makes one more knowledgeable, the process of repentance makes one more humble, more compassionate, and closer to Allah. This holistic transformation carries a depth that the jahiliyyah mentality could never reach.

Furthermore, a person who knows they have the right to make mistakes can make bolder choices. They try new things, push their limits, and step into the unknown — because failure will not destroy them; it will rebuild them. This freedom is the source of both individual and collective functionality, productivity, and vitality.

Mistake as the Gateway to Mercy

Making mistakes is an inevitable dimension of humanity's existence on earth. Yet this inevitability is not a sentence — it is, on the contrary, a divine wisdom. Had the human being never erred, they could never have experienced the transformative power of repentance. They could never have felt, so profoundly, their need for Allah's infinite mercy. They could never have confronted their own limitations and freed themselves from the chains of arrogance.

The jahiliyyah mentality sees mistakes as stains and attempts to cleanse them through judgment, shame, and exclusion. Quranic ethics, however, sees mistakes as occasions for repentance, maturation, and drawing closer to Allah. The distance between these two understandings is not merely a difference in attitude, but the expression of two fundamentally different ontological readings of who the human being is.

For the believer, a mistake is not the final stop — it is the threshold of a new beginning. The servant who stands at that threshold turns to their Lord, gives voice to

their remorse, rises again with renewed resolve, and continues on their way. This is precisely the great truth that the jahiliyyah mentality could never know, but that can only be discovered in the depths of surrender and faith: Mercy blossoms in the very heart of the mistake.

The Expressions "InshAllah" and "Amen" in Islam

The Place of "InshAllah" in the Quran

"InshAllah" is an Arabic expression meaning "if Allah wills." Muslims use it when speaking about future matters, rooted in the deep belief that nothing occurs outside Allah's will. Its basis in the Quran is clear and unambiguous. In Surah As-Saffat (37:102), Ishmael says to his father, "InshAllah, you will find me among the patient." This verse demonstrates that the expression traces back to the speech of the messengers themselves. Furthermore, in Surah Al-Kahf, Allah directly commands Muslims never to say "I will do this tomorrow" without saying "InshAllah." This command is decisive, as speaking of future events while disregarding Allah's will directly contradicts the concept of tawhid and belief in divine decree. Throughout the Quran, the limitations of human will and the truth that all things occur by Allah's permission are emphasized repeatedly. Thus, "InshAllah" is not merely a linguistic habit but a deeply rooted expression with Quranic foundation and creedal significance.

The Origin and History of "Amen"

The origins of the word "Amen" reveal a particularly striking picture. It derives from a Semitic root meaning "firm, stable, faithful, trustworthy." In the Greek Bible it is generally used to mean "so be it," while English Bible translations render it as "truly" or "verily." Its historical background shows a deep connection to Egyptian civilization. Between approximately 1550 and 1070 BCE, when Thebes served as Egypt's capital, a deity known as Amon or Amin rose to prominence and became Egypt's chief god. Together with his consort Mut and son Khonsu, he formed the Theban Triad, and his name was proclaimed aloud during religious ceremonies. His name later evolved to Amon Ra or Amin Ra, earning the title "king of the gods." The Hebrews are estimated to have lived under bondage in this region for approximately four hundred years. It is thought that during this long period of captivity, the word "Amen" first passed into the Hebrew language, and from there into the languages of Christians and subsequently Muslims. The word entered Turkish through Arabic, carrying the meanings "may Allah accept it" and "so be it."

The Place of "Amen" in the Quran: An Absence or a Signal?

The word "Amen" does not appear in the Quran. There is no verse or direct command requiring it to be said after prayer. This finding entirely refutes the claim that the practice is Quranic in origin. The word's entry into Islamic literature came through hadith collections compiled two to three centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. It is therefore difficult to prove that the use of "Amen" was consciously and personally adopted during the Prophet's own lifetime. In this context: the Quran makes clear that Allah's hearing and acceptance of prayers is not contingent on any

verbal formula. Allah knows what passes through His servant's heart and the sincerity of their intention. Any approach that makes the utterance of a specific word after supplication obligatory and presents it as an act of worship runs contrary to the spirit of the Quran.

The Relationship Between Traditional Practices and the Quran

Many traditions that developed independently of the Quran throughout Islamic history have gradually come to be perceived as indispensable parts of the religion. Traditional Islamic understanding attributes great importance not only to the Quran but also to hadiths, schools of jurisprudence, and customary practices that accumulated over time. This multi-layered structure has at times produced a situation in which the Quran's clear rulings have been overshadowed or pushed into the background. The word "Amen" is a concrete reflection of this situation. Though absent from the Quran, it has been so thoroughly adopted over the centuries that it is now considered an inseparable part of supplication. Yet the fact that a practice is embraced by a large community does not prove that it is religiously obligatory or Quranic in basis. This is where the concept of *bid'ah* becomes relevant — innovations introduced into the religion after the fact that do not belong to its original essence.

The Question of Bid'ah and "Amen"

Bid'ah in Islamic terminology refers to new practices and understandings added to the religion after the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Religious rituals that lack a clear Quranic command or a practice demonstrably established by the Prophet himself may be considered bid'ah. "Amen" deserves serious scrutiny in this light. Its origin is disputed and appears to be deeply connected to the Egyptian religious tradition. It does not appear in the Quran. Its entry into Islam occurred only two to three centuries after the Prophet's death. When all these elements are considered together, presenting "Amen" as a binding act of worship grounded in the Quran contains serious inconsistencies.

A Comparative Assessment of the Two Expressions

When "InshAllah" and "Amen" are evaluated together, the fundamental difference between them becomes clearly apparent.

InshAllah appears in the Quran and its use is commanded there. It expresses submission to Allah's absolute will and power. It serves as a reminder of human limitation and aligns directly with the belief in tawhid — carrying profound creedal content far beyond a mere linguistic habit.

Amen, by contrast, does not appear in the Quran, its use is not commanded there, and its entry into Islam dates to a period long after the Prophet. Its origin points to a different cultural tradition, and it found its way into religious literature only through later hadith compilations.

This comparison makes unmistakably clear how significant the difference in religious legitimacy between the two expressions is.

The Quran is a comprehensive and complete guide revealed to lead humanity, containing rulings for every sphere of life, and it remains Islam's sole unchanging and reliable source. Traditional practices, cultural accumulation, and historical processes must not be allowed to supersede this source. "InshAllah" is a Quranic expression firmly grounded in the Quran, traceable to the language of the messengers, and a concise expression of submission to Allah. "Amen," on the other hand, is absent from the Quran, points to a different cultural tradition in its origins, and appears to be a later addition to Islam. Presenting it as a religious obligation is therefore incompatible with the Quran's message. True adherence to the Quran requires questioning historical habits and cultural accumulations. A Muslim's most fundamental duty is to read Allah's revealed Book directly, to understand it, and to shape their life under its guidance. Traditions can only be properly appreciated when tested and evaluated against this standard.

The Purpose of Human Existence: Ego, Meaning, and the Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions of Turning to God

Throughout human history, the most fundamental question has always remained the same: "Why do I exist?" This is not merely a philosophical curiosity; it is an existential call that every person confronts at some point in life — perhaps in a moment of loss, perhaps in the emptiness that follows success, or perhaps in the sleeplessness of midnight. Philosophers across history have produced different answers to this question, religions have put forward their own truths, and modern psychology has attempted to decode the human inner world through scientific tools. Yet Islam does not simply offer an intellectual response to this question; it invites the human being directly onto a path of life, a consciousness of servitude, and an understanding of ultimate surrender. Here, we will examine the purpose of human existence in light of Islamic teachings, classical Islamic thought, and the findings of modern psychology — exploring the ego's dominion over the human being, the roots of the meaning crisis, and where genuine peace can truly be found.

The Purpose of Creation: The Depth of Worship

The Quran states the purpose of human creation clearly. Verse 56 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat serves as a fundamental reference point: "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me." While this verse may appear at first glance to point to a narrow meaning, the concept of "worship" (ibadet) in Islamic thought carries an extraordinarily broad content. Worship is not confined to practices such as prayer, fasting, and supplication. Every act a person performs with the intention of seeking God's pleasure, every truthful word spoken, every virtuous behavior displayed falls within the scope of worship. Viewed from this perspective, the purpose of existence does not confine the human being to a narrow and monotonous mold; on the contrary, it offers the possibility of grounding the entirety of life on a meaning-laden foundation. Giving thanks upon waking in the morning, acting with integrity in one's work, showing compassion to a loved one, or restraining a surge of anger — all of these have a single purpose: drawing closer to God. This shows that the human being exists in the world not merely as a biological entity, but as the bearer of a spiritual responsibility.

The Meaning Crisis and the Dominion of the Ego

In the modern age, human beings possess more knowledge, comfort, and opportunity than perhaps ever before in history. Yet paradoxically, the "meaning crisis" of this age has deepened to an equal degree. People cannot find satisfaction in what they have, cannot find happiness in their achievements, and struggle to find their time meaningful. One of the most important factors underlying this picture is the excessive centralization of the ego in human life. The Quran defined this condition centuries ago with piercing clarity. Surah Al-Furqan, verse 43, declares: "Have you seen the one who takes his own desires as his god? Will you then be a guardian over him?" This verse draws attention to the matter of human beings deifying their own desires. "Hawa" — fleeting wants, the ego's pursuit of instant gratification, and its constant drive to expand — is precisely this. When a person follows their hawa, they are in fact erecting an idol with their own hands. This idol is never satisfied; it is never sated by praise, by possessions, or by success.

Psychological science explains this condition through concepts such as "narcissistic defenses" or an "inflated self." When an individual places their own ego excessively at the center, it leads to internal instability and deep fractures in relationships. The ego evaluates everything from its own perspective, regards others as instruments, closes itself off to feedback, and over time constructs a self-perception detached from reality. The remarkable convergence between the Quran's portrayal of the person who makes their "hawa" a deity and psychology's concept of the "inflated self" is striking. Both frameworks point to the same conclusion: the person who makes their own ego the center of everything inevitably grows isolated and flounders in meaninglessness.

Viktor Frankl and the Universality of the Search for Meaning

Viktor Frankl, one of the most important psychologists of the 20th century, made profound observations about the spiritual resilience of human beings amid the horror he personally witnessed in Nazi concentration camps. According to Frankl, the most fundamental psychological need of the human being is not pleasure or power, but meaning. From this insight he developed his approach of "logotherapy," which places the individual's discovery of a meaningful foundation for life at the center of treatment. In Frankl's famous words: "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."

The point at which this approach converges with the Islamic perspective is remarkably powerful. Faith offers the human being not merely a belief system, but a comprehensive worldview in which every event, every pain, and every joy carries meaning. Verses 22–23 of Surah Al-Hadid summarize this understanding with striking force: "No calamity befalls the earth or yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah — so that you may not grieve over what you have lost, nor rejoice in pride over what you have been given." What kept Frankl alive in the concentration camps was precisely this spirit: a deep conviction that every suffering holds a meaning. Islam has grounded this conviction on an even deeper foundation through the concepts of

"qadar" (divine decree) and "tawakkul" (reliance on God).

Escape into the External World and the Reality of Inner Emptiness

One of the most common behavioral patterns of the contemporary person is the attempt to suppress inner restlessness through outward engagements. Hobbies, entertainment, social media, consumption habits — while all of these may partially address legitimate needs, they remain far from offering a genuine solution to inner emptiness. A person moves from one hobby to the next, returns from a vacation, and confronts the same restlessness once more. Because the matter lies not outside, but within.

The Quran communicates this truth with remarkable directness in verse 28 of Surah Ar-Ra'd: "Verily, in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest." The word rendered as "rest" or "tranquility" in this verse derives from the Arabic root "itminan" — conveying not a momentary relief, but a deep, lasting, unshakeable state of peace.

From a psychological standpoint, this resonates with Martin Seligman's concept of "meaningful life." Seligman, one of the founders of positive psychology, demonstrated that the mere pursuit of pleasure does not satisfy the human being, and that lasting well-being is possible only through meaning, connectedness, and service to a transcendent value. Islam defined this transcendent value centuries before: closeness to God.

The Purification of the Self: Tazkiyah and Psychological Maturation

In Islam, "tazkiyah" — the purification of the self — stands at the center of the individual's spiritual development. Surah Ash-Shams, verse 9, declares: "Truly, he who purifies it has succeeded." This process of purification requires the person to confront their own darker dimensions, bring their desires under control, and rebuild the self in accordance with God's pleasure.

Carl Jung's concept of the "shadow" offers a thought-provoking psychological parallel here. According to Jung, a human being is constituted not only by the aspects of themselves of which they are aware, but also by those they have repressed, denied, and refused to accept. True maturation requires recognizing this "shadow" and establishing a healthy relationship with it. The more a person flees from their own darkness, the more that darkness takes hold of them in different forms.

Islam's understanding of the struggle with the self (nafs) expresses the same reality in a different language: a person must recognize their weaknesses, their arrogance, and their ego, confront these dimensions honestly, and seek refuge in God through this struggle. The intersection of psychological integration and spiritual maturation is no coincidence. Both approaches point to the truth that a human being cannot fully exist without confronting their own depths. The difference is this: Islam regards this journey not as a solitary one, but as a process of purification walked under God's guidance and in the light of revelation.

Said Nursi: The Transformation of Faith into Peace

The life of Said Nursi occupies a special place in this discussion as an example of theory made tangible. Subjected throughout his life to exiles, imprisonment, and harsh conditions, Nursi never lost his inner peace. He expressed the secret of this himself: "Since we possess a blessing as infinitely precious as faith, old age too is welcome, illness too is welcome, death too is welcome. If there is anything unwelcome, it is sin, licentiousness, heresy, and misguidance." (The Gleams, Twenty-Sixth Gleam)

These words carry a thematic resonance with Frankl's experience in the concentration camps. Both men proved through lived experience that even the harshest external circumstances cannot govern a person's inner world. Nursi's peace was nourished not by what he possessed, but by his faith and his closeness to God. This also converges with what psychology calls "internal locus of control": the individual who anchors their peace not in external conditions but in an inner foundation of meaning is able to withstand life's blows with far greater steadiness.

Breaking from the Values of Ignorance: Individual and Societal Transformation

The transformation that Islam offers the human being is not limited to individual purification. It also encompasses a societal and cultural rupture. The concept of "jahiliyyah" (ignorance) refers not only to pre-Islamic Arab society, but more broadly to systems of value and ways of life shaped independently of God. Verse 22 of Surah Al-Mujadila demonstrates that this transformation encompasses relationships as well: it is made known that a community which believes in God and the Last Day does not harbor affection in their hearts for those who oppose God and His Messenger — even if they are their fathers, sons, brothers, or relatives. This is a remarkably sharp criterion. The foundation of love is no longer kinship, tradition, or self-interest, but faith and shared devotion to God. Psychologically, this reflects the healthy setting of boundaries and the cultivation of value-based relationships. To be protected from being shaped in the wrong direction by one's environment, a person must consciously and intentionally build their relationships.

The Keys of the Unseen and the Peace of Surrender

Verse 20 of Surah Al-Ahqaf addresses those who squandered their worldly pleasures believing they were living a "fine" life: "You exhausted your pleasures in your worldly life and indulged in them." This warning is a call that draws the human being away from an insatiable cycle of consumption and toward true values.

Verse 59 of Surah Al-An'am then offers the theological foundation of surrender: "With Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them but He." This awareness protects the human being from exhausting themselves over what they cannot control. Understanding that one need not know everything or control everything brings a profound sense of relief from a psychological standpoint as well. "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy" (ACT) in modern psychology guides people toward accepting what they cannot control and taking steps aligned with their values. Islam's concept of "tawakkul" — complete reliance on God — overlaps with this psychological dynamic in a remarkable way.

Not an Ego-Centered, but a God-Centered Life

The question of human existence is not merely an intellectual exercise. It directly shapes the practical fabric of life: what we value, whom we love, what grieves us, and where we seek peace. The answer Islam offers is both simple and profoundly transformative: the human being was created for devotion to God. This devotion rescues life from meaninglessness, restrains the ego, places relationships on a healthy foundation, and builds lasting peace within the heart.

Modern psychology affirms this truth through different concepts but with the same essence: meaning, internal focus, value-based living, confronting the self, and commitment to a transcendent value — all of these both strengthen and heal the human being psychologically.

In Frankl's concentration camp and in Nursi's prison cell, both men were seen to have lived a common reality: however dark the external world may be, the inner world can be illuminated. This journey is the most profound struggle a human being has with themselves. Surrendering to the ego is easy, for the ego constantly demands to be fed, praised, and gratified. But this gratification is never complete. True fulfillment is possible only when the heart reaches the purpose for which it was created.

The call of Surah Ar-Ra'd still echoes: Verily, in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest. This is a promise — and in every era of history, in every corner of the world, there have been those who verified this promise through lived experience. Now this call is directed, once again, and solely, to you.

Understanding the Quran Through the Quran: A Comprehensive Assessment on Exegesis, Psychology, and Freedom

The Quran, in Islamic belief, is not merely a holy book; it is simultaneously the source, measure, and arbiter of religious knowledge. Verse 114 of Surah Al-An'am is particularly decisive in this context: Allah declares that He has revealed the Book in a clear and detailed manner, and draws attention to the meaninglessness of seeking any judge other than Him. This verse forms the foundation of an epistemological stance that places the Quran at the center of religious understanding. If the Quran has been revealed by Allah in "detailed" form, the necessity of turning to external sources for its comprehension becomes debatable. For a complete and perfect divine word carries within itself a claim of sufficiency.

The Methodological Foundation of Interpreting the Quran Through the Quran

Verses Explaining One Another

The fundamental basis of the method of understanding the Quran through the Quran lies in the semantic relationship between verses. The Quran approaches the same subject from different angles across various surahs; a matter briefly touched upon in one verse is elaborated extensively in another. This structure brings with it a kind of internal consistency and a capacity for self-explanation. When the meaning of a verse is evaluated not in isolation but within the framework of meaning it carries across the whole of the Quran, it becomes apparent that the text forms its own

unique discipline of interpretation. The reader relying on this method grounds their interpretation not in human speech, but in divine word.

The Question of Muhkam and Mutashabih Verses

Verse 7 of Surah Al-Imran presents one of the most critical points of this discussion:

"He is the One Who has revealed to you the Book, of which some verses are absolutely clear—they are the foundation of the Book—while others are allegorical. Those with deviant hearts follow the allegorical verses seeking discord and their own interpretation—but no one knows their true interpretation except Allah. Those well-grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in this entire Book—all of it is from our Lord.' But none will be mindful of this except people of reason." (Surah Al-Imran, 7)

The verse speaks of two types of verses: muhkam (clear) and mutashabih (allegorical). Muhkam verses are described as the Mother of the Book, while mutashabih verses refer to texts that carry multiple meanings and are difficult to interpret. The verse states that those with deviation in their hearts pursue mutashabih verses with the intent to cause discord. It emphasizes that only Allah knows the true interpretation of mutashabih verses. According to this observation, the stance of those with sound faith is: "We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord." This expression demonstrates that surrender, not forced interpretation, is the principle. In this context, the method of understanding the Quran through the Quran also draws its own limits from within itself: what can be interpreted is explained through the muhkam verses; what cannot be interpreted is entrusted to Allah.

On the Epistemological Status of Hadith

Historical Doubts

The compilation of hadiths took place decades — even centuries — after the passing of our Prophet Muhammad. It is known that various ruptures occurred in the chains of oral transmission during this process, and that the problem of fabricated hadiths has been acknowledged by Islamic scholars themselves. Classical hadith scholarship itself registered this reliability problem internally by categorizing hadiths as weak, fabricated, and sound. This situation raises serious question marks regarding placing hadiths in the same epistemological position as the Quran. In contrast to the belief that the Quran is of divine origin and is preserved, hadiths are subject to human transmission processes and therefore exhibit a structure open to error and intervention.

The Risk of Contradiction with the Quran

While the Quran foregrounds Allah's attributes, the principle of justice, human dignity, and the use of reason, hadiths contain rulings that are in tension with these principles. The most sound way to resolve this tension is to accept that the Quran is sufficient for religion.

The Limits of Traditional Religious Authority

The Cult of Sheikh, Exegete, and Saint

In certain periods of Islamic history, the discourses of religious figures have in practice taken precedence over the Quran. The views of individuals referred to by titles such as "sheikh," "saint," and "great exegete" became sanctified over time, and these views became unquestionable. This situation prepared the ground for religious understanding to drift away from its divine source and into a human and cultural domain. Yet the Quran does not designate any person's discourse as an absolute point of reference. On the contrary, the Quran's structure of addressing all people directly envisions a model of unmediated divine communication.

The Limitations of Sectarian Interpretations

Sectarian literature has been shaped according to the conditions of particular geographies, cultures, and historical periods. These interpretations will stand in conflict with the Quran both in their own era and until the Day of Judgment.

Psychological Liberation: Engaging Directly with the Quran

From External Authority to Internal Responsibility

Modern psychology grounds the healthy personality development of the individual in autonomy, self-awareness, and internal consistency. Complete dependence on external authorities, on the other hand, can cause the individual to externalize their decision-making processes, dull their capacity for questioning, and lose self-confidence. The individual who turns directly to the Quran undergoes a profound transformation in this regard: an unmediated connection is established between Allah's word and their own reason and conscience. This connection frees the individual from the search for external approval and transforms them into a subject who personally assumes responsibility for their own faith.

The Psychological Burden of Formalistic Religiosity

Within traditional religious structures, the individual may sometimes feel compelled to continue practices they have not internalized but cannot abandon out of respect for authority. This situation leads to the state of internal inconsistency defined in psychology as "cognitive dissonance." As the gap between what one claims to believe and what one lives widens, anxiety, guilt, and loss of meaning deepen within the individual. The Quran-centered approach can free the individual from this conflict. For when the foundation of faith is the understood and internalized divine word, religious practices cease to be a formalistic obligation and become a reflection of a conscious surrender.

The Quran's Call to Reason and Thought

The Quran is one of the rare sacred texts that commands its reader to think. Phrases such as "Will you not reason?" and "Will you not reflect?" are repeated in many places throughout the Quran. These expressions encourage not a passive submission, but an understanding of faith that thinks, observes, and questions. This structure is directly related to the cognitive development of the individual. A Muslim engaged in

the effort to understand the Quran through their own reason is a mentally active and responsible subject. This stance aligns with the concepts of "self-efficacy" and "intrinsic motivation" in modern psychology.

Inner Peace and Spiritual Balance

The Quran can also be evaluated as a tool for spiritual purification. An individual who turns to the divine word free from the pressures of meaningless tradition, contradictory interpretations, and anxieties about authority experiences their faith on a purer, more consistent, and more peaceful foundation. This peace is the product not of external conditions, but of internal consistency. An individual who establishes a direct relationship with Allah's word leads a life of faith grounded not in fear or social pressure, but in a surrender nourished by understanding. This is the most solid foundation of spiritual balance.

The approach of understanding the Quran solely through the Quran offers a consistent and profound perspective from theological, methodological, and psychological angles. This approach represents an understanding that fixes the source of religious knowledge in divine word, questions the binding nature of human additions, and positions the individual as a free, conscious, and responsible subject of faith. Furthermore, the effort to place the Quran at the center of religious understanding can be regarded as one of the most powerful paths toward both approaching truth and achieving psychological liberation. True faith is possible only through complete surrender to Allah's word — not to the word of another. And the most solid form of this surrender is built by reading, thinking about, and striving to understand the Quran oneself.

Equality, Piety, and the True Criterion of Salvation

Islam constitutes one of the most deeply rooted and comprehensive religions in human history, offering a holistic doctrine that defines the individual's responsibilities both toward God and toward society. At the center of this doctrine lie three fundamental issues: the purpose of humanity's creation, the understanding of justice in social relations, and the conditions of individual salvation. While numerous verses of the Quran address these matters from various angles, verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat stands as one of the rare passages that encompasses all three dimensions in a single statement. The verse, which reads: "O mankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know each other. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you" — simultaneously declares a statement of reality, a social principle, and a criterion of salvation. When examined in its historical context, conceptual depth, and contemporary reflections, this verse emerges as a manifesto that summarizes Islam's understanding of the human being.

The Quranic Meaning of Unity and Plurality

Verse 13 of Al-Hujurat opens with an observation: "Indeed, We created you from a male and a female." This sentence contains layers of meaning that extend far beyond its plain appearance. The verse is a declaration that no group can be inherently

superior to another. This emphasis carries a profound objection against a worldview in which individuals claim superiority based on their lineage, race, or dynasty.

The verse then proceeds to offer a rationale for the plurality among human beings — their division into nations and tribes: "so that you may get to know each other." Reading this phrase carefully reveals that difference is positioned not as a ground for conflict or a criterion of hierarchy, but rather as a means of mutual acquaintance and understanding. Different languages, cultures, geographies, and traditions are the elements that constitute the richness of humanity. Yet this richness confers no privilege in divine evaluation.

The historical context makes the revolutionary nature of this principle even more apparent. The verse was addressed to the Arabian Peninsula at a time when tribalism was deeply rooted and defining. In that society, a person's identity was largely determined by which tribe they came from, and ancestral superiority formed the cornerstone of social hierarchy. Against this backdrop, Al-Hujurat 13 is understood not merely as a religious counsel, but as a call for profound social transformation.

In today's world, the relevance of this principle is even more striking. In the modern age, a person's worth is commonly measured by their economic power, social status, or identity affiliations. Income level, level of education, ethnic origin, or national identity have become the primary criteria shaping an individual's position in society. The principle the Quran establishes invalidates all of these hierarchies and evaluates the human being solely through the lens of their conscious relationship with God.

Taqwa: The Sole Criterion of Superiority

The final sentence of the verse makes plain what true superiority consists of: "Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you." With this statement, the concept of taqwa is placed at the center of Islam's understanding of the human person.

Taqwa is most commonly translated into English as "fear of God" or "God-consciousness." While this translation conveys the most basic meaning of the concept, it falls short of reflecting all of its richness. Taqwa encompasses a deep sense of consciousness and responsibility toward God, scrupulous observance of His boundaries, a sincere and inwardly motivated avoidance of evil, and a constant awareness of standing in God's presence. In this regard, taqwa is not limited to a feeling of fear; it is a multi-layered concept that also encompasses awareness, accountability, and conscious orientation.

Yet taqwa has an even deeper dimension, one directly connected to Islam's understanding of divine decree. Taqwa should not be understood as a virtue the servant produces independently through their own will. From the perspective of qadar (divine predestination), taqwa is not a quality the servant generates, but a state that God creates within the servant. A person can neither produce their own faith nor their own taqwa independently. Whoever God turns toward Himself attains taqwa; whoever He leaves to their own course follows a different path. In this case,

superiority is not a personal achievement belonging to the human being, but a grace and disposition from God.

This truth not only prevents arrogance but also renders the contempt of others meaningless. If a person possesses taqwa, it does not stem from their own effort but from a state that God has bestowed upon them. Therefore, placing taqwa as the criterion of superiority simultaneously establishes a deep foundation of humility that diminishes the human being before every possible form of pride. Race, lineage, gender, or social status are not qualities a person earns through their own will; they are characteristics brought from birth. Just as these differences among human beings are of God's creation, so too is the difference in taqwa fundamentally of God's creation. It is for this reason that Islam accepts no innate characteristic as a criterion of superiority — for the one who created these characteristics is God Himself, and to take pride in them or to belittle others on account of them is equivalent to objecting to God's creation.

Motherhood, Salvation, and the Limits of Religious Discourse

The Quran mentions kind treatment of parents immediately after the worship of God, with the hardship endured by the mother emphasized in particular. Having acknowledged this reality, the widely circulated saying — "Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers" — warrants careful evaluation.

First and foremost, the status of this saying in hadith literature is contested; there is scholarly disagreement in the science of hadith regarding the degree of its authenticity. However, the more fundamental issue lies in how this statement has been interpreted and operationalized in society. Many people understand it to mean: "Motherhood, in and of itself, guarantees entry into Paradise." Yet this interpretation stands in clear contradiction to the foundational principles of Islamic doctrine.

In Islam's understanding of salvation, no social role — neither motherhood nor fatherhood nor any other identity — automatically grants a person the right to Paradise. The determining criterion for entering Paradise, as all sources of Islam affirm unanimously, is faith in God and leading a life in accordance with His pleasure. Motherhood, when fulfilled with patience, love, and responsibility while seeking God's pleasure, becomes a form of worship — a precious endeavor. However, this endeavor acquires meaning at the point where it meets God's pleasure; when lived merely as a social identity, it loses its religious significance.

The dangerous dimension of such sayings lies in positioning motherhood not as a devotional effort but as a direct guarantee of Paradise. This framing directs a person to place their reliance upon a power or status outside of God's exclusive decree. This contradicts the understanding of tawhid — a belief in salvation resting solely upon God. Shirk (associating partners with God) should not be understood merely as idol worship; attempting to open the gates of Paradise — a matter that belongs exclusively to God's authority — through social roles is another manifestation of this danger.

The Origins of Superstitions and Their Destructive Effect on Religious Teaching

The concept of "superstition" in Islam refers to beliefs and practices that have no foundation or basis in the religion and have infiltrated it through cultural transmission. Superstitions are most often discourses produced in good faith or from noble feelings, yet over time they come to overshadow and obscure the authentic teaching of the religion.

Superstitions feed not only on ignorance but also on the psychological needs of human beings. The individual seeking security in the face of uncertainty tends to reduce religion to patterns that offer easier and more guaranteed outcomes. The human soul, seeking definitive assurances in the face of life's complexity and the reality of death, sometimes inclines to substitute the dimension of responsibility and consciousness that the Quran establishes with ready-made formulas of salvation.

Over time, this process leads to the replacement of the understanding of individual accountability — central to the essence of religion — with guaranteed formulas tied to certain social roles or rituals. The saying "Paradise lies beneath the feet of mothers" is a typical product of this process. A legitimate and beautiful sentiment — honoring one's mother — has gradually transformed into a saying that opens the door to a doctrinal error. What is noteworthy here is that the deviation has its source not in ill intent, but in good intent. This is an element that makes superstitions even harder to address, since critiquing them can create the impression that the critic is attacking the beautiful feeling in question.

Islam's struggle against superstitions is, at its core, a matter of protecting doctrine. Every form of social discourse must be re-evaluated in the light of the Quran. Any belief that directs a person toward other entities or statuses sharing God's exclusive authority — no matter how deeply rooted or widespread — is a deviation that must be abandoned.

Social Responsibility and Individual Worship: A Holistic Balance

Verse 13 of Al-Hujurat is not only an individual declaration of equality; it is also a powerful call to social responsibility. When people are taught that differences among them serve as a means of mutual acquaintance and cooperation, legitimacy is removed from turning those differences into grounds for conflict or hierarchy. Differences are created not as a basis for claims of superiority, but as a foundation for mutual understanding and solidarity.

While Islam positions salvation as an individual matter, it also regards social justice as an inseparable part of that salvation. Social responsibilities such as justice, trustworthiness, commanding good, and forbidding evil are all encompassed within a person's taqwa. Thus taqwa covers not only prayer, fasting, and individual worship, but also being just and compassionate toward others, contributing to social peace, and standing against every form of oppression.

Within this holistic understanding, the value of motherhood, fatherhood, teaching, or any other social role also becomes clear. These roles transform into acts of worship when fulfilled with an intention and effort that seeks God's pleasure; when lived merely as social identities, they lose their religious meaning. In Islam's understanding

of the human being, no role, no title, and no identity can substitute for a conscious relationship with God.

Verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat is a universal declaration that articulates Islam's understanding of the human person, the principle of social equality, and the criterion of salvation in its most concise form. The verse clearly establishes that factors such as race, lineage, gender, or social status confer no superiority in the sight of God, and proclaims that true superiority is to be sought in taqwa alone. Taqwa is not a state resting on the individual's own achievement, but on the grace of God. This truth renders both arrogance and the contempt of others fundamentally meaningless.

Valuable social roles such as motherhood can serve as a means of salvation only when they meet God's pleasure; when they exist merely as social identities, they cannot fulfill this function. However human the psychological vulnerabilities underlying the infiltration of superstitions into religion may be, the deviations they produce at the level of doctrine cannot be overlooked.

Islam's call remains as valid today as ever: to establish justice and equality among human beings, to liberate oneself from the intellectual and moral blindness created by superstitions, and to build a consciousness in which each individual feels their accountability solely before God. Islam evaluates the human being not by the identities they possess, but by the conscious relationship they cultivate with God — and without building this consciousness, no affiliation, no status, and no role can be a cause of salvation. This is the universal and timeless invitation that Al-Hujurat extends to all of humanity.

Human Psychology, Divine Wisdom, and Spiritual Awakening in the Light of Surah Abasa

The Quran is not merely a guide to worship; it is a comprehensive collection of divine speech that addresses the inner world of humanity, social relationships, and existential questions. Each surah, each verse, invites human beings to deeper contemplation and more sincere self-examination. This invitation sometimes comes through a narrative, sometimes through direct address, and sometimes through a historical event. Surah Abasa contains one of the most striking of these invitations: the ancient scene in which the Prophet Muhammad experienced an encounter with a blind companion and was immediately corrected by Allah. While the opening verses of the surah may appear at first glance to describe an ordinary social interaction, upon deeper examination they open the door to a multi-layered world of meaning — one that lays bare the weaknesses of human nature, how profoundly divine vision differs from human perception, and the unique value of every individual in the sight of Allah.

While the Prophet Muhammad was engaged in conveying Islam to a group of Mecca's leading figures, a blind companion came and requested instruction from him. At that moment, the Prophet turned away with an inward sense of displeasure at this interruption. Thereupon, the first four verses of the surah were revealed:

"He frowned and turned away. Because the blind man came to him. And what would

make you know? Perhaps he might be purified. Or he might be reminded and the reminder might benefit him." (Abasa, 1–4)

The tone of these verses is noteworthy. Allah speaks of the Prophet in the third person rather than the second — a form of rebuke. The divine discourse narrates the event with the air of an outside observer, drawing the reader into the scene as well, and plants this question in the mind: What would you have done? An important point must be noted here. This event does not indicate that the Prophet possessed a moral flaw; on the contrary, it shows that he too operated within the limits of human nature, and that Allah intervened through revelation to both correct those limits and to make them a lesson for all of humanity. The greatness of the Prophet is clearly evident in the fact that when this verse was revealed, he did not react with any defensive impulse, and thereafter approached the companion with immense compassion and reverence.

The Error of Prioritization: A Universal Human Weakness

The central psychological lesson of Surah Abasa concerns the human error of prioritization. At that moment, the Prophet was focused on those who occupied the upper tiers of Mecca's social pyramid — individuals whose influence, if they were to be persuaded, he believed would contribute to the spread of Islam. By ordinary human logic, this is quite a reasonable calculation: greater influence, more people, a wider Muslim community. Seemingly strategic, seemingly rational. Yet Allah's measure is different. Divine wisdom does not look to a person's social status, economic power, or political influence. The measure in Allah's sight is the heart's orientation toward Him — and this orientation most often takes root in society's margins, among the marginalized, among the unseen.

This truth is expressed with crystal clarity in the following verse: "Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." (Al-Hujurat, 13)

Throughout history, all societies have classified people by their visible qualities: rich or poor, powerful or weak, healthy or sick, sighted or blind. This classification has become a social reflex and has at times seeped even into religious circles. Surah Abasa radically rejects this reflex. A person's social worth and their worth in Allah's sight are two entirely different measures, completely independent of one another. And the one that truly matters is, without question, the divine measure.

The Psychology of the Blind Companion: The Inner World of the Unseen

In most accounts, the focus tends to remain on the Prophet. Yet looking at the other side of this scene — at the companion's inner world — enriches the layers of meaning considerably. As a visually impaired individual, the companion had already been rendered invisible in many areas of social life. The Mecca of that era had a social structure built on status and power, one that marginalized the weak. Within this structure, the daily experiences of belittlement, being overlooked, and being devalued that a blind person faced were the kind that left deep marks. Perhaps for this reason, the companion was seeking a guide who could illuminate his soul and answer the questions in his heart. And on that day, he turned to the very Messenger of Allah. One

must consider the psychological weight of that moment. A person who had embraced faith, who had set out seeking knowledge, who perhaps had not lost hope despite the social exclusion he had experienced up to that point — and then, at the very door he trusted most, to be met with coldness.

The natural human response at this juncture is to lean toward doubt, toward vulnerability, toward the question: "Why am I not considered important?" Yet looking at how the event unfolds, we see that the companion transformed this vulnerability not into collapse, but into the construction of a stronger faith. This transformation is the greatest psychological gift the Quran offers humanity: the capacity to turn pain into a doorway of understanding.

Physical Blindness and Spiritual Awakening: The Wisdom of Paradox

The Quran employs the metaphor of blindness quite frequently and powerfully. The most striking of these metaphors is undoubtedly found in Surah Al-An'am:

"Is he who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom?" (Al-An'am, 122)

This verse declares that the true blindness is not of the eyes but of the heart. One who has lost the faculty of physical sight can, if their heart is open, be among those who truly see the truth. One whose physical eyes function perfectly, yet whose heart is sealed, may be walking in profound darkness. This distinction is deeply meaningful in the context of Surah Abasa. The companion, though unable to see with his eyes, had been illuminated by the light of faith. He had no eyes to be distracted by the adornments and worldly glitter around him; and for this reason, perhaps, he was asking deeply the very questions others would easily brush aside.

Physical deprivation sometimes drives a person toward a deeper inner journey. When you cannot see the outside, you learn to look within. When you cannot hear the noise, you come to understand the language of silence. From this perspective, the companion's blindness ceases to be a tragedy and becomes a form of divine pedagogy. Allah sends each servant into the world equipped for their own unique journey. Even if a part of that equipment appears to be a deficiency or a deprivation, divine wisdom buries within that very deficiency a seed of awakening.

Divine Correction: The Educative Power of Revelation

One of the most theologically striking dimensions of Surah Abasa is that Allah directly and openly corrects the Prophet. This reinforces one of the foundational principles of Islam: revelation did not descend merely to affirm the beautiful, but to bring forth the truth. No one, regardless of how exalted their station, is exempt from divine correction. This also supports one of the elements that affirm the historical authenticity of the Quran. Had the Quran been of human authorship, these verses rebuking the Prophet would most likely never have appeared in the text. On the contrary, this authenticity is regarded as one of the most powerful pieces of evidence for the divine origin of the Quran.

Furthermore, this divine correction is not a disparagement of the Prophet — quite the opposite, it is a confirmation of his greatness. For to accept correction is the very measure of a person's maturity. After receiving this revelation, the Prophet fundamentally changed his attitude toward the companion. This is a concrete example of how the Quran guides and transforms the human soul.

Social Justice and the Quran's View of the Vulnerable

Surah Abasa does not merely deliver an individual moral lesson; it also carries a powerful message of social justice. In pre-Islamic Arab society, being disabled, orphaned, enslaved, or female consigned a person to the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy. Islam was born as a radical objection to this hierarchy. Looking at the life of the Prophet, one sees that this objection took on a systematic form: choosing a modest life, refusing to be a king-messenger, sitting at the same table as the poor, emancipating slaves and restoring to them their social dignity — all of these are concrete reflections of Islam's understanding of social justice.

The event in Surah Abasa is one of the moments in which this understanding crystallizes. By elevating the priority of a blind companion's request over the importance of Mecca's powerful figures at that moment, Allah conveyed this message: social power is not a criterion of superiority in Allah's sight. On the contrary, those who are marginalized, weak, and defenseless are often closer to Allah's mercy.

Every Trial Is a Door: The Framework of Meaning in Adversity

When a human being finds suffering meaningless, they collapse. When they give it meaning, they rise. The Quran, at precisely this juncture, offers a powerful framework of meaning. Every hardship experienced, every physical or social deprivation, is not a punishment — it is a trial, and very often a gift.

"Is Allah not sufficient for His servant?" (Az-Zumar, 36)

This question is among the deepest the Quran directs at the human soul. All the powers in which humans take refuge can disappoint them in various ways. Society excludes, people err, statuses shift. Yet Allah's mercy and concern never come to an end under any circumstance. For the companion, that moment of rejection was not a potential disappointment — it was the fuse of a divine intervention that would be remembered until the Day of Resurrection, would be inscribed in surahs, and would keep his memory alive within eternity. From this perspective, what appears to be the heaviest burden can be the envelope of the greatest gift.

The Eye of the Heart: The Nature of True Seeing

The final point where all these reflections converge is the matter of the heart's eye — something the Quran insistently emphasizes. Physical eyes perceive the material world; but it is the heart that sees the truth. This distinction is not merely metaphorical; it is also an epistemological and moral one. One who looks with blind prejudice is, in truth, not seeing at all. One who mistakes status for truth, who deems the powerful worthy and the weak worthless, walks with open eyes yet a blind heart. The companion, in contrast, without eyes yet with a heart oriented toward Allah's

light, was among those who truly saw.

Indeed, Surah Al-Hajj declares this reality plainly: "For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the chests." (Al-Hajj, 46)

This verse seems to summarize the entire world of meaning in Surah Abasa in a single sentence. To see is not a matter of physical capacity; it is a matter of moral and spiritual orientation.

The opening verses of Surah Abasa are built upon what appears to be a minor social incident. Yet these verses contain universal lessons about the depths of human psychology, social justice, the difference between divine wisdom and human reason, and the unique value of every individual in Allah's sight. The story of the blind companion has reminded millions of people across the centuries of this: Society may overlook you. People may not prioritize you. Life may place heavy burdens upon you. But Allah sees you. And not only does He see you — He knows your request beneath those burdens, your silent search, your fragile hope — and He answers all of it.

This is the deepest consolation the Quran offers: Even if eyes grow dark, even if doors close, even if people turn away — the door of the Most Merciful is always open. And everyone who enters through that door, whoever they may be, whatever obstacle they may live with, truly begins to see. For at that door, the light is not outside. It is within.

Kandil Nights and Return to the Quran: A Critical Evaluation of the Traditional Understanding of Worship

The Islamic world today finds itself in a deep crisis encompassing political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Understanding the roots of this crisis requires more than looking at external factors alone; it demands a questioning of internal dynamics, particularly how religious understanding has been shaped. Over the centuries, the lived practice of Islam has drifted away from the clear guidance of the Quran, transforming into a structure built on hadith narrations, traditions, and social customs. Kandil nights and the Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr) celebrations represent one of the most prominent examples of this transformation.

The Source of Beauty and Truth: Revelation or Tradition?

From the standpoint of Islam's epistemological principle, the ultimate criterion for determining whether something is "correct" or "beautiful" is the Quran. Social customs, inherited traditions, or practices adopted by the majority cannot, on their own, serve as sources of religious legitimacy. The Quran is presented as the final guide to which Muslims must turn in all matters. Indeed, in verse 50 of Surah Al-An'am, the following is addressed to our Prophet Muhammad: "Say: I do not tell you that Allah's treasures are with me... I only follow what is revealed to me." This verse makes clear that even our Prophet Muhammad did not go beyond revelation, and that all standards of Islam must be grounded in divine revelation.

Evaluated from this perspective, the celebration of kandil nights and the attribution of special forms of worship to these nights have no direct basis in the Quran. The

traditionalist understanding grounds the legitimacy of these practices in hadith narrations and historical tradition. Yet if it is accepted that virtuous conduct and correct worship must be determined by revelation, then the presentation of special nocturnal rituals — not explicitly commanded or encouraged by the Quran — as religious obligations must be questioned. The nourishment of individual and collective reason from the Quran, and the comparison of habits, legends, and widely held popular beliefs against divine revelation, emerge as fundamental necessities in this context.

The Contradictory Nature of Narrations Concerning the Night of Power

The Quran's Surah Al-Qadr speaks only of the existence of the Night of Power and of its being better than a thousand months. However, the Quran contains no information regarding which calendar night this corresponds to. Traditional Islamic understanding has attempted to fill this gap with hadith narrations, yet the resulting picture is riddled with internal inconsistencies. Examining hadith sources, one encounters narrations that differ and often contradict one another regarding the identification of the Night of Power:

- One narration states it should be sought in the last seven nights of Ramadan (Bukhari, Laylat al-Qadr 2)

- Another points to the last ten days (Bukhari, Laylat al-Qadr 3)

- A third view singles out only the odd-numbered nights of the last ten

- Various different dates have also been proposed, such as the 27th, 25th, and 29th nights

- Furthermore, some narrations state that this knowledge was "lifted" from the Prophet Muhammad himself (Bukhari 1874)

This contradictory picture raises a fundamental question: If the Night of Power holds such great importance and plays such a decisive role in worship, how can one explain the fact that this night has not been clearly identified, or that such deep contradictions exist among the narrations? Seeking the answer to this question in the Quran exposes the most fundamental weakness of the traditionalist approach. The fact that institutions such as the Directorate of Religious Affairs, rather than resolving existing contradictions, have declared the 27th night to be the "Night of Power" by administrative decree makes the depth of this problem even more visible.

The Contradiction Between Special-Night Worship and the Quran

The Quran contains no command requiring worship to be confined to specific time periods or special nights. On the contrary, the Quran's general framework reveals that worship and devotion to God constitute a continuous and holistic way of life. This understanding is expressed with striking clarity in verse 162 of Surah Al-An'am: "Say: Indeed my prayer and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds." This verse emphasizes that Muslim identity is not confined to certain nights and days, and that worship must be spread across the whole of one's life.

The claim advanced by traditional understanding — that worship performed on the Night of Power erases a year's worth of sins — stands in serious contradiction with the Quran's understanding of forgiveness. The Quran teaches that sins can only be forgiven through sincere repentance, the rectification of wrongs, and the living of a righteous life. The many verses informing believers that God's door of mercy is always open make clear that His forgiveness is not confined to a particular night. The belief that observing a specific night will purify people of their sins opens the door to an understanding that reduces worship to formalism and strays from the spirit of the Quran. Such a belief system leads people away from the responsibility of fulfilling God's commands throughout the year, feeding the illusion that religious obligations can be compressed into a single night.

Kandil Celebrations and the Question of Ummah Unity

Kandil nights appear, on the surface, to function as a shared ritual that unites the Islamic world. However, whether these celebrations genuinely foster a sense of ummah consciousness is debatable. Looking at the Islamic world today, one observes that societies in which kandil celebrations are fervently maintained simultaneously suffer from deep political divisions, economic injustices, and cultural disintegration. This reveals that solidarity at the level of ritual has not translated into principled and active unity. In verse 73 of Surah Al-Anfal, the expression "Those who disbelieve are allies of one another" draws attention to the fact that the other side maintains an organized solidarity. Underlying this warning is the message that Muslims, too, must come together and unite not merely through formal rituals, but in a genuine way around the principles of the Quran.

The true unity of the ummah comes not from celebrating a shared night on the calendar, but from being shaped around a common value system of justice, equity, and revelation. When kandil celebrations are observed in a context where political and social problems are ignored, they may serve to conceal those problems rather than contribute to their resolution.

The Social and Historical Consequences of Departing from the Quran

The complaint conveyed in verse 30 of Surah Al-Furqan carries a striking significance in this context: "And the Messenger said: O my Lord! Indeed my people have taken this Quran as something abandoned." This verse does not merely recount a historical event; it also carries the character of a universal warning that remains valid for every age and geography in which the Quran has been marginalized from life. One of the fundamental causes of the crisis the Islamic world finds itself in today is that religious life has been built upon fabricated narrations and superstitions rather than upon the Quran. This process has led to the severing of the connection between many practices put forward in the name of religion and the Quran, and to the gradual weakening of Islam's original teaching. This vulnerability in the traditionalist religious understanding has driven societies into a kind of religious stupor, while the question of whether formal acts of worship genuinely produce consciousness and responsibility has largely gone unanswered.

Return to the Quran for Genuine Change

All of these assessments point to the fact that a radical return to the Quran is essential if the Islamic world is to rise again. This return requires not only a reexamination of individual worship practices, but also the reconstruction of social values, political understanding, and cultural identity along the axis of revelation. Accepting the sufficiency of the Quran means placing it at the center of life in both theoretical and practical terms. Purging the understanding of worship from formalism and grasping the Quran as a holistic guide to life constitute the prerequisite for both individual salvation and social transformation.

This critical evaluation of kandil nights and Night of Power celebrations is, at its core, seeking an answer to a more comprehensive question: what determines the essence of Islam, and according to what criteria Muslims should shape their lives of worship. The Quran is the decisive and ultimate source in answering this question. In situations where narrations contradict one another and the Quran contains no explicit ruling, manufacturing a religious obligation reflects an attitude that weakens the Quran's function as a guide. The Islamic world's return to its own essence will come not through the multiplication of rituals, but through the understanding, internalization, and application of the Quran to all domains of life. True healing lies in the Quran, and the path to reaching that healing passes through walking under the guidance of revelation rather than tradition. This great transformation — from humiliation to honor, from fragmentation to unity, from formalism to essence — will only be possible when the Quran is once again placed at the center of life.

Traditionalist Religious Perception and Quran-Centered Islam: An Evaluation on Religious Holidays

Religious holidays hold profound social and cultural significance in Islamic society. However, the fact that these holidays are not mentioned in the Quran — the primary source of Islam — has turned the subject into a theological debate. The divergence between the traditionalist understanding of religion and the Quran-centered approach to Islam has given rise to a line of thought that questions the religious legitimacy of these holidays. So, are these holidays truly a part of Islam, or are they simply traditions that have formed throughout history?

The Quran serves as a clear guide, established as the sufficient source for the Islamic religion:

> "Is it not sufficient for them that We revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Indeed in that is a mercy and reminder for a people who believe." (Al-Ankabut, 51)

This verse emphasizes the sufficiency of the Quran as the foundation of Islam. However, according to the traditionalist understanding, Islam is not limited to the Quran alone but has been enriched through hadiths, schools of jurisprudence, and historical interpretations. In this context, religious holidays appear not as essential elements of Islam, but as rituals added to religious understanding by traditions and communities.

Religious holidays in the Islamic world are seen not merely as spiritual occasions but

as phenomena that reinforce social solidarity. Traditionalists argue that holidays unite communities, reconcile those at odds with one another, and stimulate economic activity. Yet these claims are open to criticism when one examines the current socioeconomic and cultural state of the Middle East:

Divided Societies: Islamic societies that have celebrated holidays for centuries are today fragmented into dozens of factions. Imperialist and Zionist influences have turned these societies into objects of exploitation.

Cultural Degeneration: The existence of holidays has failed to prevent economic inequalities, the effects of the interest-based financial system, or social corruption. The institutions of charity and zakat commanded by the Quran have collapsed, replaced by a consumerism-driven understanding of celebration.

The concept of "holiday" is not found in the Quran. This suggests that holidays are not a religious obligation but a social custom. The Quran emphasizes that acts of worship and religious rituals must remain within the boundaries set by Allah. Going beyond these boundaries is viewed as humanity attempting to teach religion to Allah:

> "Say: Would you inform Allah of your religion while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth? And Allah is Knowing of all things." (Al-Hujurat, 16)

The traditionalist understanding of religion has, throughout history, incorporated various customs and conventions into the religion itself. This has led to a departure from the essence of Islam and caused people to follow the footsteps of their forebears rather than the Quran:

> "But they say: Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are in their footsteps following." (Az-Zukhruf, 22)

Holidays are among the most visible examples of these customs. Yet there is no concrete evidence to suggest that these rituals have solved any of humanity's problems.

Although religious holidays continue to exist as a tradition within Islamic societies, their legitimacy is debatable within a Quran-centered understanding of Islam. Islam aims for the salvation of the individual and society — both in this world and in the hereafter. This goal is only achievable by returning to the Quran and practicing religious rituals in accordance with their Quranic foundations.

Viewing holidays as a religious obligation amounts to straying from the very essence of Islam. The Quran is not an incomprehensible book; it guides humanity in distinguishing right from wrong. Heeding this guidance will strengthen Islam's impact on both individuals and society, and will bring about genuine unity.

> "So proclaim that which you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists." (Al-Hijr, 94)

Differences Between the Concept of Masjid in the Quran and Today's Mosques

The masjid, one of the most deeply rooted institutions of Islamic civilization, has undergone a profound transformation throughout history. Between the concept of masjid described in the Quran and the mosque as commonly practiced today, there lies not merely an architectural gap, but a deeper and more significant functional and conceptual divide. Here, we will examine this divide in light of the Quran's own expressions and verses, and discuss why a return to the masjid's original function is necessary.

The Origin and Meaning of the Masjid Concept in the Quran

The word "masjid" derives from the Arabic root "s-j-d," meaning "a place of prostration." In the Quran, this concept refers not merely to a physical space where prayer is performed, but to a realm where submission to God, reverence, contemplation, and spiritual purification are lived. In other words, the masjid functions as a school where the soul is trained, revelation is internalized, and individuals of piety are nurtured. Within this framework, the masjid is far more than a place of individual worship. It should be understood as a center of civilization where the collective conscience of society is formed and moral and spiritual values are transmitted from generation to generation. The Quran's vision of the masjid reflects a holistic understanding that encompasses both the individual and society.

The Masjid Founded on Taqwa: Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 108

One of the verses that most clearly reveals the Quran's understanding of the masjid is verse 108 of Surah At-Tawbah:

"Never stand in it. A mosque founded on taqwa from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in. In it are men who love to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who purify themselves."

This verse sets a remarkably telling criterion: a masjid is only a true masjid if it has been built on the foundation of taqwa. Taqwa means a sense of accountability before God, deep inner discipline, and moral vigilance. Therefore, a masjid cannot be regarded as such if it is merely a structure built of stone and concrete, devoid of this consciousness. The subsequent mention of "men who love to purify themselves" does not point solely to physical cleanliness. The concept of purification here encompasses both bodily and spiritual cleansing: the purification of the mind from doubt, the heart from arrogance and hypocrisy, and conduct from deceit. God's declaration that He loves those who purify themselves reveals that the masjid is not merely a space for ritual, but an active arena of spiritual transformation. Whether many of today's mosques meet this criterion is a matter that deserves serious questioning.

Spiritual Discipline in the Masjid: Surah Al-A'raf, Verse 31

Verse 31 of Surah Al-A'raf addresses believers with the following command regarding their approach to mosques:

"O Children of Adam! Take your adornment at every masjid."

Although this verse may appear at first glance to refer only to physical order, a far deeper meaning lies beneath the surface. Going to the masjid prepared, clean, and with care is a reflection of the reverence felt for that place, the spiritual engagement that will occur there, and the awareness of standing in the presence of God. This preparation also brings the mind of the visitor into order, freeing it from ordinary daily concerns and elevating it to a higher level of attention and intention. In today's mosques, however, the majority of visitors are observed to perform their prayers and depart quickly, without establishing a deep relationship with the spiritual atmosphere the mosque offers. This is a sign of drift from the spirit of "quality preparation and quality participation" that the verse evokes.

Preachers Who Accept No Wage: Surah Hud, Verse 51, and the Question of Religious Officials

One of the most consistent principles conveyed in the Quran regarding the messengers is that those who deliver God's message harbored no material expectation in return for this service. Verse 51 of Surah Hud expresses this principle in the following words:

"O my people! I do not ask you for any reward for this. My reward is only upon the One who created me. Will you not then reason?"

Similar statements are repeated in the Quran from the mouths of many messengers — Noah, Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, and others each reminded their communities of this principle repeatedly. This consistency is no coincidence; it demonstrates that the authenticity, purity, and sincerity of the call to truth can only be preserved through independence from material interest. Yet when one examines the contemporary mosque structure, what is seen is an institutional network of religious services consisting of imams and muezzins salaried by the state or foundations. Where the content of the call is shaped by institutional expectations rather than an independent understanding of revelation, a significant departure from the Quranic principle of prophethood is in question. There is no verse in the Quran providing for the existence of these roles or for their organization in this manner. This reality reveals that the origin of today's religious services model lies not in the Quran, but in institutional practices that formed over the course of history.

The Funeral Prayer and the Quran's View of Death: Surah Al-Hashr, Verse 10

The matter of the funeral prayer, which is counted among the functions of today's mosques, also presents a striking picture when evaluated from a Quran-centered perspective. There is no verse in the Quran commanding or describing a specific ritual for the funeral prayer. The basis for this practice belongs to the disputed hadith literature. Verse 10 of Surah Al-Hashr is highly illuminating in understanding the Quran's approach to deceased believers:

"And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts any resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.'"

This verse clearly demonstrates that what is expected of believers for the deceased is not the performance of a specific ritual, but sincere prayer and a heartfelt plea for forgiveness. This approach represents an understanding in which intention, prayer, and the heart take precedence over ritual.

Functional Collapse: Why Are Mosques Becoming Estranged from Society?

When all of these observations are brought together, it becomes evident that today's mosques are experiencing a serious functional narrowing. It is a reality that mosques are increasingly empty, that younger generations show little interest in mosques, and that religious gatherings have devolved into ritual activities attended only by certain age groups. The fundamental reason for this is as follows: the masjid as described by the Quran is a space that transforms the human being. It invites one to question, reflect, purify, and grow spiritually. Today's mosques, by contrast, have become stages for ritual practices performed at set times and then abandoned. Deep contemplation of revelation, discussion of social ethics, and individual spiritual guidance have withdrawn from these spaces. The mosque's loss of its social function is not only a religious problem, but a societal one as well. For in the Quran's vision, the masjid is the institution that forms the moral backbone of society. When this institution becomes dysfunctional, serious fractures emerge in the moral fabric of society as well.

A Return to the Quran

Closing the deep divide between mosques and the Quranic understanding of the masjid requires returning to several fundamental principles. First and foremost, mosques should be not merely spaces for prayer, but centers of learning where revelation is actively processed and discussed. Deep readings on how Quranic verses are to be understood in social and individual contexts are activities befitting the spirit of these spaces. Second, strengthening the principle of volunteerism in religious services and conducting the call to truth independently of institutional interests will be in alignment with the Quranic principle exemplified by the messengers. Third, in order to rekindle the interest of young people in the mosque, these spaces must be transformed into genuine environments of thought, dialogue, and spiritual searching. Environments where the Quran is presented in a living, life-relevant manner naturally draw every age group toward them. Finally, the questioning of ritual practices not clearly commanded or described by the Quran, and the replacement of these practices with prayer, contemplation, and Quran-centered engagement, will contribute to the mosque's recovery of its original identity.

The masjid described by the Quran is an institution that is a school of taqwa, a center of spiritual purification, and the heart of societal transformation. Today's mosques, however, have drifted away from this profound function and become mere venues for the performance of ritual practices. This transformation has occurred largely through the gradual entrenchment of historical and institutional practices that go beyond the Quran. Addressing this matter should neither be motivated by a spirit of criticism nor perceived as an assault on cherished values. On the contrary, the essence of this questioning is to heed the Quran's own call: to return to revelation, to contemplate,

and to rebuild the masjid truly upon taqwa. These sacred spaces — in which God has declared His love for those who purify themselves — deserve to exist not as mere structures of stone and concrete, but as living centers that transform souls and illuminate societies.

Halal-Haram in Islam: Sectarian Interpretations and a Critical Analysis of the Camel Urine Narration

The Concept of Halal and Haram in Islam

Whether a food is halal or haram in Islam is grounded in the explicit rulings of the Quran. Over the course of history, sectarian interpretations, cultural habits, and hadith narrations have laid the groundwork for significant divergences in this area. Yet the Quran's position on the matter is remarkably clear: everything outside what is explicitly forbidden is considered permissible. This piece examines a Quran-centered understanding of halal and haram, questions whether sectarian interpretations can generate religious law, and critically analyzes the camel urine narration from both religious and scientific perspectives.

Halal and Haram Foods in the Quran

The Core Principle: Permissibility Is the Default

The Quran's general framework is that the clean and beneficial things of the earth have been made halal for humanity. Surah Al-Baqarah 2:168 states this principle plainly:

> "O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and good on earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. He is truly your sworn enemy."

Two critical concepts stand out in this verse: halal (religiously permitted) and tayyib (clean, wholesome, health-appropriate). Islam's approach to food is therefore not limited to a purely religious categorization — hygiene, health, and human nature are necessary components of the equation as well.

Foods Explicitly Forbidden

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:3 enumerates the forbidden foods in detail:

> "Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, what has been dedicated to other than Allah, that which has been killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and that from which a wild animal has eaten — except what you slaughter — and that which is sacrificed on stone altars, and that you seek decision through divining arrows."

The statement that follows is of paramount importance: "This day I have perfected for you your religion." This emphasis carries the character of a religious closure, signaling that no new categories of prohibition will be added. Surah Al-An'am 6:145 confirms this framework:

> "Say: I do not find within what has been revealed to me forbidden to one who would

eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine — for indeed, it is impure — or it be slaughtered in disobedience, dedicated to other than Allah."

As is evident, the Quran draws the boundary between halal and haram within a clear and closed framework. Going beyond this framework to institute new prohibitions amounts to surpassing the bounds of religion itself.

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:1 and the General Scope of the Permissible

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:1 declares that animals have been made halal, with the exception of hunting while in a state of ihram:

> "O you who have believed, fulfill contracts. Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you — hunting not being permitted while you are in the state of ihram."

This verse underscores that animals are by default permissible, and that the forbidden constitutes an exceptional and limited category.

The Contribution and Limits of Hadith

Hadith that are consistent with the Quran offer important references that reinforce the understanding of halal and haram. The following hadith, narrated by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah, is particularly noteworthy:

> "The halal is what Allah has declared halal in His Book, and the haram is what Allah has declared haram in His Book. What He has remained silent about is pardoned."

A narration from Al-Daraqutni echoes this:

> "Allah has forbidden certain things — do not violate them. He has remained silent about certain things, not out of forgetfulness but out of mercy for you — do not go looking into them."

These hadith make it clear that instituting new prohibitions in areas where the Quran is silent is not a religious obligation but, on the contrary, an act of overstepping.

Sectarian Interpretations: Cultural Preference or Religious Necessity?

Contradictions Between Schools of Law

The interpretations of different legal schools on halal and haram occasionally contradict one another:

- Shafi'i school: Considers fox and hedgehog meat permissible.

- Hanafi school: Regards fox meat as repugnant and therefore impermissible.

- Shia tradition: Considers rabbit meat disgusting and refrains from eating it, even though the Quran does not explicitly forbid it.

A theological contradiction emerges from this picture: if one school's imam

considers a food halal while another considers it haram, then one of them has necessarily stepped outside Allah's ruling. The question then becomes — which imam holds the authority to speak on Allah's behalf?

The Warning of Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:87

The Quran itself provides the answer:

> "O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."

This verse is a universal warning applicable not only to individuals but to all religious interpreters, including the imams of the legal schools. To declare forbidden what Allah has made permissible is to legislate in His place — which conflicts with tawhid, one of Islam's most fundamental principles. Legislation belongs to Allah alone; any human interference in this domain constitutes a serious theological problem.

The True Source of Sectarian Differences

These differences among the schools are not religious in origin but cultural and geographical. A food regarded as repugnant in Arab culture may be perfectly ordinary in another culture. Tastes and habits are variable; Allah's rulings are not. Sectarian prohibitions may therefore be understood as personal preferences or cultural conventions — they carry no religious binding force.

A Critical Analysis of the Camel Urine Narration

The Content of the Narration

A narration recorded in both Bukhari and Muslim relates that a group of ailing individuals from the 'Ukl or 'Urayna tribes, on the advice of the Prophet Muhammad, drank a mixture of camel milk and urine and recovered. This narration is put forward as evidence that camel urine has healing properties.

Incompatibility with Quran 2:168

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:168 stipulates that what is consumed must be both halal and tayyib (clean/wholesome). Urine, however, is a biological waste product — it contains the toxins, urea, ammonia, and various harmful compounds that the body expels via the kidneys. It is impossible for such a substance to fall within the scope of tayyib. That the Prophet Muhammad would recommend something contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Quran is theologically untenable, since the Quran explicitly states that the Messenger cannot act contrary to revelation.

Scientific Assessment

Modern medicine and chemistry refute the claims of this narration:

Composition of camel urine:

Water, urea, creatinine, ammonia, salts, and various toxins — all filtered waste products destined for excretion.

Composition of camel milk:

A nutritious fluid containing casein and whey proteins, fats, lactose, vitamins, and minerals.

When the two are mixed:

- Urea reacts with milk proteins, forming precipitates.

- Ammonia raises the pH of the milk, causing casein to curdle and degrading its nutritional value.

- The mixture acquires an unpleasant odor and texture.

In short, camel urine actually destroys the beneficial components of the very milk it is supposed to accompany.

The Position of Clinical Studies and International Health Authorities

Some research on camel urine has been conducted in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, but these are small-sample, observational studies lacking control groups. None of the major international health authorities — the WHO, FDA, or EMA — have approved camel urine as a medical treatment. On the contrary, some observational studies have documented serious infections such as brucellosis, as well as diarrhea, nausea, and gastrointestinal distress in patients who consumed camel milk-urine mixtures. Furthermore, when experimental findings attributed to camel urine are examined closely, the actual source of the observed effects appears to be the urea and mineral compounds it contains — components that are equally present in the urine of other animals, including humans. The evidence therefore does not establish the existence of a healing property unique to camel urine.

The Possibility That the Narration Is Fabricated

Several significant grounds suggest the camel urine narration may be fabricated or distorted:

Contradiction with the Quran: It is religiously inconsistent that the Prophet would recommend a substance of the type the Quran explicitly prohibits.

Historical context: In pre-Islamic Arab Bedouin culture, camel urine was used for skin conditions and as a disinfectant. It is highly plausible that this tradition was subsequently cast in the form of a hadith in an attempt to confer religious legitimacy upon it. A parallel case can be seen in India, where cow urine continues to be used in certain Hindu traditions as a remedy for skin diseases. Legitimizing such practices through religious references has been a widely employed method throughout history.

Commercial motivation: The possibility that the narration was fabricated or disseminated by those with a commercial interest in the camel trade cannot be dismissed. Religious legitimacy is one of the most effective means of stimulating demand.

Rhetorical sleight of hand: Presenting the healthy components of milk and urine in the same vessel is — consciously or unconsciously — a way of making the questionable substance appear legitimate. Since people know milk is beneficial, they tend to assume that whatever accompanies it must be beneficial as well.

Conclusion

The Quran has defined the boundaries of halal and haram through clear, intelligible, and universal criteria. Going beyond these boundaries to institute new prohibitions, or to declare an evidently impure and harmful substance medicinal, contradicts both the letter and the spirit of the Quran.

Sectarian interpretations reflect the cultural accumulation of specific geographies and eras. They may be evaluated within the framework of personal preference and habit, but they cannot take the place of Allah's rulings. A school imam who declares forbidden what Allah has made permissible incurs grave religious responsibility under Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:87.

The camel urine issue is a striking illustration of how a narration that is groundless from religious, scientific, and historical perspectives can be dressed up in an appearance of authenticity. While the Quran commands eating from what is clean and halal, presenting waste, impure, and bodily-harmful substances as medicine directly contradicts that command — a contradiction that science confirms with concrete evidence.

Ultimately, a healthy and halal life in Islam rests on the Quran's explicit rulings, the guidance of reason, and choices conducive to good health — free from cultural biases, sectarian rigidities, and narrations devoid of scientific foundation. Such an understanding of religion offers a more solid basis, both individually and collectively.

The Name of the Book Given to Moses in the Quran: Torah or Tablets?

Moses (Musa) is one of the most frequently mentioned prophets in Islam. His name appears over a hundred times in the Quran, and his story is addressed within a broad framework spanning the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt to the revelation at Sinai. An intriguing question, however, is whether the Quran explicitly names the book given to Moses as "the Torah." While this may appear to be a simple terminological debate, it actually carries profound theological and historical dimensions.

The Use of the Word "Torah" in the Quran

The word "Torah" appears 18 times in the Quran. The majority of these occurrences position the Torah as a body of text belonging to the Jewish faith in a general sense. For example, Surah Al Imran 3:3 states:

> "He has revealed to you the Book with truth, confirming what came before it, just as He revealed the Torah and the Gospel."

This verse presents the Quran as a confirmation of both the Torah and the Gospel.

What is particularly noteworthy, however, is that in this and similar verses the Torah appears not as a book revealed exclusively to Moses, but rather as a representative of a broader tradition of revelation. Indeed, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:44 reads:

> "Indeed, We revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light, by which the submissive prophets judged for the Jews."

In this verse, those who judge by the Torah are not limited to Moses alone — the reference points to a plurality of prophets. This nuance is highly significant, as the Torah is not presented as a revelation received by a single prophet.

The Name of What Was Given to Moses: The Tablets

The Quran gives a concrete description of the form of the revelation given to Moses. Surah Al-A'raf 7:145 states:

> "And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things."

This verse clearly states that the revelation given to Moses came in the form of "tablets" (Arabic: alwāḥ). These tablets have generally been understood as stone tablets containing, among other things, the Ten Commandments. Yet the Quran assigns no special name to these tablets. While a reference to "the Book of Moses" does appear in Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:12, this too is a general characterization and does not definitively establish that the name of this book is the Torah.

This has an important theological implication: the Quranic terminology appears to avoid using "Torah" as the proper name of the text revealed specifically to Moses. Rather than being an incidental linguistic choice, this can be read as a systematic stance connected to the Quran's broader understanding of revelation.

The Post-Moses Period: The Quran's Historical Framework

The Quran also recounts the transformations undergone by the Children of Israel after Moses. Surah Al-Baqarah 2:246 states:

> "Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs, 'Send to us a king, and we will fight in the cause of Allah'?"

This verse conveys that the history of the Children of Israel continued after Moses, that new prophets were sent to them, and that social and political crises unfolded. The following verse (2:247) then states:

> "Their prophet said to them, 'Indeed, Allah has appointed Saul as your king.'"

The story of Saul (Talut) bears a strong parallel to the biblical account in 1 Samuel. The resemblance between those who questioned Saul's legitimacy in 1 Samuel 10:27 and those who disputed Talut's authority in the Quran is striking. This parallel demonstrates that the Quran is in deep historical dialogue with the Torah — while at the same time showing that these narratives reflect the legacy not of a revelation

confined to Moses alone, but of a much broader chain of prophets.

The Torah: A Single Book or a Corpus?

Within the Jewish tradition, the word Torah carries multiple layers of meaning. In its narrowest sense it refers to the Five Books attributed to Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). In a broader sense, however, it can encompass the entire body of Jewish sacred literature. One particularly notable point is that the final chapters of Deuteronomy recount the death of Moses in the third person — a fact that has led many thinkers throughout history to conclude that these sections could not have been written by Moses himself. Deuteronomy 31:7 records Moses addressing his successor Joshua before all of Israel:

> "Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance.'"

This passage presents Moses's words as a farewell address and is immediately followed by an account of his death. The structure of the Torah suggests that the text is not the product of a single prophet's one-time revelation, but rather of a written tradition that took shape over decades. The Quran's use of "Torah" to refer to this entire tradition — while keeping the original revelation given to Moses in a separate frame — can be read as a consistent position that aligns with this historical reality.

An Assessment from the Perspective of the Quran's Understanding of Revelation

According to the Islamic understanding of revelation, the divine message sent to each prophet is essentially the same at its core, even if its form and legal details may differ. This framework also explains why the Quran does not use an explicit formulation such as "Allah gave Moses the Torah." Such a statement would have confined the Torah to Moses's domain alone and undermined the unity that must be established with the revelations of subsequent prophets.

When the Quran is examined carefully, it becomes clear that the revelation given to Moses is described as "tablets," while the name "Torah" is used to denote a broader and more encompassing tradition of revelation. The stories of Saul and Goliath that follow Moses, the transfer of leadership to Joshua, and the accounts of dozens of prophets judging by the Torah all point strongly to the fact that this book is not the exclusive legacy of a single prophet.

This observation places the historical and theological dialogue between the Quran and the Torah on a richer and more complex foundation. The Quran neither wholesale rejects the existing Torah text nor reduces it to the revelation of a single prophet. Instead, it treats it as a collective heritage shaped by a long chain of divine guidance.

Superstition and Truth in the Perception of the Quran

The Quran, the cornerstone of Islamic civilization, has guided the lives of millions throughout the centuries, built societies, and offered divine guidance to humanity. Yet in the shadow of this great heritage, certain beliefs incompatible with the Quran's essence have occasionally taken root among the people — beliefs distant from its true message. Phrases like "the Quran will strike you down" or "black spots form on the heart" are superstitions rooted not in religious texts, but largely produced by oral culture and social perception. This piece will address these misconceptions and examine what the Quran is, how it should be understood, and what genuine respect for it truly means.

What Is the Quran? A Carrier or a Message?

To understand the Quran, one must first grasp its true nature. According to Islamic belief, the Quran is the divine word revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through revelation — God's direct address to humanity. Yet the value of this divine word derives not from the material it is written upon, but from the meaning it contains. Throughout history, the Quran has been written on countless different surfaces. Before the invention of the printing press it was copied by hand, and today it resides on millions of devices in digital form. Despite all these different modes of transmission, the essence of the Quran has not changed. The fundamental conclusion to draw is this: sanctity lies not in the carrier object, but in the divine message being carried. Grasping this truth holds the key to dissolving many superstitions surrounding the Quran. The Quran's presence in a phone application does not diminish it. The tearing or burning of a page does not cause God's word to perish. For the words of God cannot be confined to paper and ink.

The Superstition That "The Quran Will Strike You": Confusing Fear with Respect

Superstitions are cultural productions — presented as religion, yet unsupported by revelation and contradicting both reason and the coherence of the Quran. One of the most widespread folk beliefs is that anyone who disrespects or behaves improperly toward the Quran will be "struck down" by it. This belief is often invoked as a warning or deterrent, particularly to instill respect for the Quran in children and young people. However, this understanding carries serious problems on several fronts.

First, it is a theological error. The Quran is not an active agent or a being with its own will. It is God's word — but verbs like "striking" and "punishing" imply that this book can be a direct subject of such actions. Punishment and reckoning belong to God, not to the physical book.

Second, it produces a fear-based understanding of religion. Respect for the Quran must be built not on fear, but on understanding and love. One of the things that drives people away from the Quran is precisely this kind of rhetoric, which turns it into something incomprehensible and dangerous. A person who reads, understands, and strives to live by the Quran does not see it as a "source of threat."

Third, it contradicts the Quran's own message. The Quran repeatedly calls people to "use your reason," "reflect," and "understand." Approaching the Quran with fear prevents a person from understanding it and from heeding this very call. Religion

taught through fear produces guilt complexes, alienation from the text, and a fear of questioning.

The Chasm Between Physical Respect and True Respect

Physical forms of reverence toward the Quran have become deeply ingrained in society: placing it on a high shelf, dusting it off, kissing it and pressing it to one's forehead, covering it with a yellow or green cloth. These behaviors are, at their core, expressions of a beautiful feeling and may be considered partially commendable. The real problem, however, is that these physical rituals come to replace genuine respect.

Many people carefully place the Quran on the highest shelf, cover it, and will not touch it without washing their hands — yet the same person never reads the Quran, never questions its meaning, and never tries to shape their life by its teachings. This is a confusion akin to mistaking a painting's frame for its content. The message of the Quran comes alive not through keeping it in a beautiful cover, but through the justice, mercy, honesty, and responsibility it speaks of. God's address to humanity in the Quran is not meant to offer a purely literary or aesthetic experience. This address is meant to transform the individual, to elevate them, and to show them the right path.

Therefore, true respect means understanding the Quran, grasping its commands and prohibitions, striving to live according to its moral framework, and sharing this message with others. Physical respect is an outward expression of intention — but respect performed without understanding is incomplete. These behaviors gain their worth only when united with meaning.

Oaths and the Quran: Who Bears Responsibility?

The belief that swearing a false oath on the Quran will "strike down" the person is also quite widespread. Such an act is undoubtedly morally reprehensible. But here, too, the theological framework must be correctly established. When a person swears a false oath on the Quran, that act does not harm the Quran — it reveals the person's own moral responsibility and inner state. God knows the intention in that person's heart and will hold them accountable accordingly. It is God who calls to account, not the Quran. In this situation the Quran is a means; the agent and the responsible party is the human being.

This distinction matters, because inverting the matter weakens the meaning of religious responsibility. When people say "the Quran will strike you," responsibility is as if severed from the relationship between the person and God and transferred onto an object. Yet the understanding of divine unity at the heart of Islam holds that everything returns to God and that reckoning takes place in God's presence.

"The Black Spot on the Heart" and Other Folk Beliefs

Another belief that appears to have religious origins — yet actually draws on fabricated narrations found in Tirmidhi and Muslim — is the idea that sinful acts leave a physical "black spot" on the heart. The concept of the "heart" as the seat of faith occupies a central place in Islamic tradition. But this does not mean sanctifying

the heart as an anatomical organ. Faith is a matter of consciousness and intention; it cannot be confined to any physical organ of the body. For this reason, loading every sin with physiological meaning out of fear that "my heart will darken" runs counter both to medical knowledge and to the spirit of the Quran.

In the Quran, the "heart" appears as:

- the site of reasoning (Hajj 46),

- intention (Al-Ahzab 5),

- the center of orientation.

It is, in other words, a center of consciousness — not a physiological one.

Disrespect Toward the Quran: It Reveals the Doer, Not the Quran

Those who intentionally burn, tear, or insult the Quran are undoubtedly committing an extremely ugly act. Such behavior reflects both moral poverty and profound ignorance. However, these acts do not harm the Quran's transcendence — they only lay bare the level of consciousness and moral collapse of the one performing them. The message of the Quran is far more powerful than those who attempt to burn or tear it. Throughout history it has been confiscated, burned, and banned time and again. Yet none of these attempts have been able to erase its existence or its influence. For the Quran is written not only on paper, but on the hearts of believers.

The Quran as Message, Not Object

Reshaping our perspective on the Quran will both strengthen our individual faith and place our collective religious understanding on a healthy foundation. In doing so, the following core principles deserve consideration:

- The Quran is not an object, but a divine message. Its value cannot be measured by its number of pages, its binding, or the material it is written on.

- True respect is nourished not by fear, but by understanding and love. The person who understands the Quran — rather than fearing it — is the one who can truly benefit from its guidance.

- Responsibility always belongs to the human being. Wrongs done toward the Quran reveal the person's own moral choices; God's reckoning is for God alone to dispense.

- Physical rituals cannot substitute for meaning. Reading, understanding, and living by the Quran is far more valuable than kissing it and pressing it to one's forehead.

- Superstition erodes religion. Beliefs such as "the Quran will strike you" or "black spots form on the heart" are products of a superficial religious understanding, far removed from grasping the Quran's depth.

The Quran is one of the greatest guides ever offered to humanity. Understanding and living it as it deserves — both individually and as a society — is the most fundamental responsibility to be assumed. Approaching the Quran not with superstition but with

understanding, not with fear but with love: this is the deepest respect that can be shown to it. Those who understand the Quran best are those who read it without fear, who question it, yet who do so in a state of profound reverence. A book that begins with the command "Read" (iqra) is meant to be read not with fear, but with curiosity and devotion.

Intercession (Shafaat): A Correct Analysis in the Light of the Quran

The concept of shafaat (intercession) has been one of the most debated issues in Islam. Etymologically meaning "to support, to mediate, to assist," shafaat has been subject to varying interpretations from the early periods of Islam to the present day. Some of these interpretations, unfortunately, nourish a belief that is incompatible with the clear declarations of the Quran: the belief that beings other than Allah possess the authority to intercede.

The Lexical and Conceptual Framework of Shafaat

Derived from the Arabic root "shaf'a," shafaat literally means to add a pair to something singular, to stand alongside someone and support them. As a legal and social term, it refers to a powerful person approaching someone of authority on behalf of a weaker person — in other words, acting as an intermediary. It is precisely at this point that the danger begins. Throughout history, people have modeled this concept on worldly social relations and transferred it to the divine realm, falling into the tendency of placing intermediaries between Allah and His servants. This tendency constitutes one of the understandings that the Quran rejects most forcefully.

Shafaat in the Quran: The Foundational Principle

The Quran takes an extremely clear and definitive stance on the matter of shafaat. Intercession belongs entirely and exclusively to Allah. This principle is expressed with complete clarity in verses 43 and 44 of Surah Az-Zumar:

"Or have they taken intercessors besides Allah? Say: Even if they have no power over anything and no reason? Say: Intercession belongs entirely to Allah. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned."

Two important points stand out in this verse. First, the behavior of those who take intercessors other than Allah is characterized as senselessness. Second, and more critically, it is proclaimed in unequivocal terms that all intercession belongs to Allah. The expression "belongs entirely to Allah" leaves no room for a partial or conditional distinction — intercession is not within the disposal of any being.

Verse 4 of Surah As-Sajdah reinforces this principle further: "You have no protector or intercessor besides Him." The statement is plain, direct, and closed to debate. The word "no" expresses an absolute rejection.

The Condition of Permission: A Manifestation of Absolute Sovereignty

In some verses, it is stated that intercession may occur with Allah's permission. This

is sometimes misinterpreted as meaning "so some can intercede after all." On the contrary, this condition of permission reinforces Allah's absolute sovereignty.

Verse 109 of Surah Ta-Ha states: "On that day, intercession will not benefit anyone except the one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and whose word He is pleased with."

Two critical conditions are apparent in this verse: permission and approval. For intercession to take place, both the one interceding and the one being interceded for must be in accordance with Allah's pleasure. The picture that emerges is this: Who will intercede? The one whom Allah has permitted. Who will it benefit? The one with whom Allah is pleased. In this case, all will and authority still belong to Allah; what is called shafaat is a form of Allah treating whomever He wills with His own mercy.

The Mushrik Understanding of Shafaat and the Quran's Rejection

During the period in which the Quran was revealed, the Arab mushrikun also believed in shafaat — however, their understanding was based on the premise that idols and exalted beings could act as intermediaries before Allah. This belief was perfectly in harmony with the social codes of the era: just as one needed a powerful mediator to appear before a ruler, Allah could be approached in the same way.

Verse 18 of Surah Yunus directly targets this understanding: "And they worship besides Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say: These are our intercessors with Allah. Say: Are you informing Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth? Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him."

This verse poses a strikingly powerful question: Are those who take intercessors besides Allah informing Him of something He did not know? The act of taking an intercessor implies viewing Allah's knowledge or power as insufficient — which directly contradicts the belief in tawhid.

Our Prophet Muhammad and the Matter of Shafaat

A significant portion of traditional Islamic interpretations holds that our Prophet Muhammad will intercede for his ummah on the Day of Judgment. This belief occupies a wide space in hadith literature; however, when considered within the framework established by the Quran, it raises some important questions.

Verse 19 of Surah Az-Zumar asks: "Then can you save one against whom the decree of punishment has been justified? Can you rescue one who is in the Fire?" This question is addressed directly to our Prophet Muhammad, and the answer is clear: No. No one — including our Prophet Muhammad — can save a person against whom Allah has rendered His judgment.

In this context, it must be stated: the absolute language of the Quran on the subject of shafaat does not grant the prophet or any other being autonomous authority to intercede. If any intercession is to occur, it is entirely Allah's decision, and only Allah makes that decision. Positioning the prophet or any other being as an "intercessor"

means both attributing to them an authority they do not possess and overshadowing Allah's absolute sovereignty.

The Angels and Shafaat: The Teaching of Surah Al-Anbiya

Another misunderstood matter regarding shafaat concerns the status of angels. Some cite the angels' privileged position before Allah as justification for taking them as intercessors. Verses 26–28 of Surah Al-Anbiya refute this error at its root:

"And they say: The Most Merciful has taken a son. Exalted is He! Rather, they are honored servants. They do not precede Him in speech, and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede except for one whom He approves, while they, from fear of Him, are apprehensive."

These verses are deeply instructive. The angels are described as the most honored of beings before Allah — yet this honor and privilege does not grant them independent authority to intercede. On the contrary, the angels tremble with fear of Allah, cannot precede His word, and may only intercede for one whom He approves. In other words, even the angels are entirely dependent on Allah in this matter.

The Danger of Perceiving Shafaat as "Divine Favoritism"

The greatest practical danger in the matter of shafaat is the perception of this concept as a kind of "divine favoritism" system. According to this perception, if one builds a relationship with the right person, prays sufficiently, or makes enough vows at certain shrines, Allah's judgment can be altered or the balance on the Day of Reckoning can be tipped in one's favor. This understanding is dangerous on several levels:

First, it trivializes Allah's justice. If favoritism works, then a servant can be saved regardless of how they live their life — which eliminates moral responsibility.

Second, it encourages the taking of intermediaries. Trying to reach Allah through "such-and-such a saint," "such-and-such a prophet," or "such-and-such a place" weakens the direct relationship between the person and Allah, making them dependent on powers other than Allah.

Third, and most dangerously, this understanding opens the door to shirk. Verse 44 of Surah Az-Zumar declares that all intercession belongs to Allah. Therefore, to attribute the authority of intercession to another being is to assign to another an attribute that belongs to Allah — which is a violation of tawhid.

The Correct Understanding of Shafaat: The Framework of Mercy and Divine Will

So what does the concept of shafaat express when understood correctly? According to the Quran's consistent message, shafaat is in reality a manifestation of Allah's boundless grace and mercy. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will treat whichever of His servants He wills with His mercy. It is possible to name this mercy "shafaat" — however, the determining will, authority, and discretion here belong entirely to Allah.

A servant's supplication for another servant may also be considered one dimension

of shafaat; but this supplication must be directed to Allah alone. There is a great difference between saying "O Allah, have mercy on this servant of Yours" and saying "O saint, intercede with Allah on my behalf." The first is a prayer to Allah; the second is placing an intermediary between Allah and His servant — and that is shirk.

Direct Relationship as the Foundation of Tawhid

The essence of Islam is a direct, unmediated, and sincere relationship between Allah and His servant. The Quran declares that Allah is "closer than the jugular vein" and invites humanity to turn directly to Him. Viewed from this perspective, the Quran's stance on shafaat can be summarized as follows:

- Shafaat belongs entirely to Allah; no other being has autonomous authority in this matter.

- No intercession takes place without Allah's permission and approval.

- Attributing the authority of intercession to beings other than Allah is a belief the Quran explicitly rejects, and it overlaps with the understanding of the mushrikun.

- Perceiving shafaat as divine favoritism damages moral responsibility and leads people toward false expectations.

- What a Muslim must do is not seek an intercessor, but perform righteous deeds, carry sincere faith, and turn directly to Allah.

The Quran's message on this matter is transparent and clear. A sound belief regarding shafaat can only be built through the guidance of the Quran. To turn to Allah not merely in word but in both intention and deed — and to accept no intermediary besides Him — is the foundation of tawhid and of true Islam.

Is the Word "Tanrı" Religiously Incorrect? An Evaluation in Light of the Qur'an and Linguistics

Islam defines Allah as an absolutely singular, supreme, and transcendent being. While the Qur'an clearly establishes Allah's names, attributes, and the doctrine of tawhid, the meaning and boundaries of words used to express Allah have been debated throughout history. The word "Tanrı," frequently used in Turkish, is characterized by some as religiously inappropriate — even as an expression that evokes mushrik connotations. However, this view aligns neither with the linguistic structure of the Qur'an nor with Islam's universal message. Here we will examine this claim from the perspectives of Qur'anic text, Arabic linguistics, and comparative religious language.

The Meaning of "Ilah" and Its Use in the Qur'an

In Arabic, the word ilah (إِلٰه) means a being that is worshipped, a deity, or in general terms, a god. The Qur'an uses this word both in polytheistic contexts and to refer to Allah. These two modes of use are extremely important for understanding the semantic layers of the word and the conceptual structure of the Qur'an.

This structure is clearly visible in "La ilaha illallah" — one of the most concise expressions of tawhid. The full meaning of the phrase is: "There is no god but Allah." Here, the Arabic word ilah is first used in its general and abstract sense, and then it is emphasized that this general concept can truly apply only to Allah. In other words, the Qur'an itself uses the concept of ilah — that is, the word "god" — to explain tawhid.

Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 163, makes this point with utmost clarity:

> "Your God is one God. There is no god but Him. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." (Al-Baqarah 2:163)

The expression "ilahukum ilahun wahid" in the verse means, word for word, "your god is one god." The Qur'an here consciously chooses the word ilah both to refer to Allah and to reinforce the emphasis on tawhid. Translating this verse into Turkish as "Tanrınız bir tek Tanrı'dır" is linguistically and religiously consistent, as it directly corresponds to the word ilah. If the word "Tanrı" were genuinely problematic, the Qur'an's own use of ilah for Allah would create an inexplicable contradiction.

An Etymological Analysis of the Word "Allah"

Among Arab linguists, there are two primary views regarding the root of the word "Allah."

The first view holds that "Allah" derives from the form al-ilah (الإله), where al is the definite article and ilah means god. The expression al-ilah transformed into "Allah" through phonetic processes. According to this view, "Allah" means precisely "the one and true God."

The second view holds that the word comes from the verbal root A-L-H (أله), which carries meanings such as to worship, to turn toward, and to take refuge in. From this perspective, "Allah" means the supreme being who is worshipped and turned to.

Both explanations reveal that the word "Allah" is organically connected, at its very root, to the concept of ilah — that is, to the concept of "god." Therefore, any approach that elevates the name "Allah" above its equivalents in other languages, or renders those equivalents invalid, contradicts the very origin of the word itself.

The Qur'an's Universal Understanding of Language

The Qur'an's approach to language and communication by no means supports the narrow view that Allah must be called by only one name. Surah Al-Isra, verse 110, establishes a decisive principle on this matter:

> "Say: Call upon Allah, or call upon the Most Gracious; by whatever name you call upon Him, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names." (Al-Isra 17:110)

This verse clearly states that Allah may be invoked by more than one name, and that all of these names belong to Him. These names reflect different attributes, different orientations, and different linguistic structures. It would contradict the internal consistency of a religion that embraces such rich plurality to regard the Turkish word "Tanrı" as incorrect.

Furthermore, the Qur'an explicitly states that every community is addressed in its own language. Surah Ibrahim, verse 4, establishes this principle:

> "And We did not send any messenger except in the language of his people, so that he could make things clear to them." (Ibrahim 14:4)

This verse demonstrates that religion cannot be monopolized by any particular language. Our Prophet Moses spoke Hebrew, our Prophet Jesus spoke Aramaic, and our Prophet Muhammad spoke Arabic. Each messenger explained Allah through the words and concepts used by his own people. Accordingly, the equivalents of "Allah" across different languages all rest on a historically and religiously legitimate foundation.

A Comparative Religious Language Perspective

When the names for God in different languages are examined, the conceptual unity proves remarkably strong. The words Elohim and El Shaddai in Hebrew, Alaha in Syriac, Elah in Aramaic, Tanrı in Turkish, Tuhan in Malay and Indonesian, and Khuda in Urdu and Persian have all been used throughout history to refer to the same supreme being.

The verse Isaiah 43:10 in Hebrew is noteworthy in this context:

> "Before Me no god was formed, nor will there be one after Me."

This is one of the strongest expressions of tawhid in Jewish scripture, and it is articulated using the word "God." If a word allegedly connoting polytheism can be used this powerfully in what is arguably the most central tawhid verse of a Jewish sacred text, then the claim that the word is inherently associated with polytheism loses all foundation.

The Decisive Factor Is Meaning, Not the Word

Perhaps the most fundamental point overlooked in this debate is this: the religious value of a word is determined not by its sound or form, but by the meaning it points to and the intention behind its use. The Qur'an supports this principle, at least indirectly. Surah Az-Zumar, verse 38, notes that the mushrik Arabs knew and used the name Allah, yet still committed shirk:

> "If you were to ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they would certainly say, 'Allah.'" (Az-Zumar 39:38)

This verse demonstrates that using the name "Allah" alone does not carry the meaning of tawhid. These individuals said "Allah" — yet at the same time they associated partners with Him. The real issue, then, is not which word is used, but who is meant by that word, with what understanding, and with what belief.

If we reverse this logic: if a person says "Tanrı" and by this means solely the one, unique, and incomparable supreme being, then this usage carries tawhidic content and is religiously legitimate.

The Source of the Objections: Knowledge or Prejudice?

When the objections raised against the word "Tanrı" are examined, it becomes apparent that the great majority of them lack any linguistic or theological foundation. The objections typically rest on the following assumptions:

First, the notion that "Tanrı" existed in Turkish mythology or the old Turkish religious tradition and therefore carries non-Islamic connotations. But this logic, if applied consistently, would render the word "Allah" equally problematic — for that word too was in use in pre-Islamic Arab societies and was known to the mushrikeen.

Second, the claim that "Tanrı" can be pluralized and therefore evokes polytheism. Yet in Arabic, ilah can also be pluralized, and the Qur'an does so itself. The fact that a word can grammatically take a plural form does not mean it is necessarily identified with polytheism. Indeed, "Tanrı" can clearly denote a single being depending on context, and has historically been used in precisely that way.

Conclusion

The language of the Qur'an does not confine the words used to express Allah to a particular Arabic form. The word ilah is explicitly used for Allah in the Qur'an, and the Turkish equivalent of this word is "Tanrı." Surah Al-Isra, verse 110, declares that Allah may be called by any of His beautiful names; Surah Ibrahim, verse 4, establishes that every messenger was sent in the language of his own people. When we bring these two principles together, we arrive at a conclusion that is perfectly clear:

To intend Allah by the word "Tanrı" is a usage that is both linguistically and religiously legitimate and consistent.

What matters is not the form of the word, but what is meant by it. Tawhid is not brought to life by the repetition of a particular sequence of sounds, but by a faith and consciousness that holds the supreme being free from all partners, equals, and likenesses. The objections to the word "Tanrı" rest neither on the clear statements of the Qur'an nor on the findings of linguistics. Such restrictive approaches narrow Islam's universal message and ignore the conceptual flexibility the Qur'an itself embraces. The truth of the Qur'an lies not in the monopoly of any particular language or word, but in the depth of meaning, intention, and tawhidic consciousness.

Linguistic and Contextual Analysis of the Word "Riqāb" in Surah Muhammad, Verse 4

The correct understanding of the Quran has been central to Islam throughout the centuries. However, in the process of translating this great text into different languages, certain words have been rendered without sufficiently examining their roots and contexts — giving rise to both losses of meaning and contentious interpretations. Here, the word "riqāb" appearing in verse 4 of Surah Muhammad will be examined from linguistic and contextual perspectives, with the aim of demonstrating why traditional translations deserve to be questioned.

The Root and Semantic Field of "Riqāb"

In Arabic, word meanings are largely grounded in three-letter roots. The word "riqāb" derives from the root R-K-B (ر-ك-ب). In the Arabic language, this root is primarily associated with the concepts of "watching," "supervising," "taking under protection," and "observing carefully." One of the strongest pieces of evidence for this semantic field is the divine attribute Er-Rakīb, one of the names of God. Appearing in Surah An-Nisa (4:1) and Surah Al-Ma'ida (5:117), this name expresses that God is the Supreme Being who watches over His servants completely and is aware of all things. The name Er-Rakīb carries no meaning of "striking a neck" or physical assault; it conveys entirely the concepts of "supreme oversight" and "encompassing supervision."

Examining how words derived from the same root are used elsewhere in the Quran makes the picture even clearer:

Surah Al-Qasas, Verse 18: In this verse, which describes the Prophet Moses spending the morning in the city in fear and watching his surroundings carefully, the verb derived from the R-K-B root is clearly used in the sense of "being on alert" and "surveilling the surroundings."

Surah Al-Qasas, Verse 21: In this verse, which recounts Moses leaving the city fearfully while looking around cautiously, the same root again appears in the context of "watching" and "careful observation."

These two examples clearly demonstrate that the R-K-B root functions consistently with the meaning of "watching/observing" in Quranic usage.

The Arabic Word for "Neck" and Its Usage in the Quran

From an Arabic grammatical standpoint, the primary word conveying the concept of "neck" is a'nāq (أعناق) — the plural of 'unuq, meaning "neck" — and this word is used explicitly in this sense multiple times in the Quran:

Surah Al-Anfal, Verse 12: In this verse, God instructs the angels to strike the necks and fingertips of the disbelievers. The word a'nāq here carries the unambiguous anatomical meaning of "neck."

Surah Ash-Shu'ara, Verse 4: In this verse, which expresses that people would bow their necks before a miracle sent down from heaven, a'nāq is used metaphorically in the sense of submission and surrender.

As seen in these verses, when the Quran intends to express the concept of "neck," it opts for a'nāq. Had the meaning "strike the necks" been intended in Surah Muhammad, verse 4, the text would be expected to use a'nāq rather than riqāb. This linguistic consistency provides a strong basis for questioning the traditional translation.

The Context of the Verse and the Problem of Logical Inconsistency

Verse 4 of Surah Muhammad conveys strategic principles to be observed during warfare. According to traditional translations, the verse reads:

"When you meet the disbelievers in battle, strike their necks. Then, when you have

overcome them, take them captive; thereafter release them either by grace or by ransom, until the war lays down its burdens."

Read carefully, this translation confronts us with a serious logical problem. The instruction "strike their necks" — describing a lethal blow — is immediately followed by "take them captive," which creates a profound internal contradiction. A person who has lost their life from a blow to the neck cannot be taken prisoner; nor can a dead person subsequently be released freely or for ransom.

When the overall structure of the verse is examined, the narrative focus is seen to be not the complete annihilation of the enemy, but rather: taking them captive once superiority has been established, and then releasing them either freely or through ransom. This context indicates that the spirit of the verse envisions a humane ethics of war — yet the traditional translation contradicts this spirit, creating an artificial tension between layers of meaning.

In light of the linguistic and contextual evidence presented above, translating riqāb as "command/observation post" rather than "neck" offers a more coherent interpretation. Under this reading, the verse may be understood as follows:

"When you encounter the disbelievers, strike their observation posts. Once you have greatly weakened them, tighten the bonds. Thereafter, either release them graciously or accept ransom until the burdens of war are lifted."

This translation is superior to the traditional interpretation on several counts. First, it preserves the internal logic of the verse: when the observation post is neutralized, the enemy is weakened, making capture and subsequent release possible — this is not a contradiction but a coherent chain of strategy. Second, it aligns with the R-K-B root's consistent usage throughout the Quran. Third, it is compatible with the verse's humane framework: the verse positions the ultimate goal of war not as annihilation, but as a gateway opening toward peace.

An Assessment of the Sources of Translation Errors

Such errors in Quranic translations may have multiple sources.

Imitation is among the most prevalent factors. When later translators adopt earlier translations without critically questioning them, errors are passed down from generation to generation. A mistaken meaning that becomes entrenched in one translation may come to be accepted as if it were correct over time.

Disregarding context is another significant factor. When the verse is read not as an isolated sentence but within the entirety of Surah Muhammad and the Quran's broader understanding of the ethics of war, the tension created by the traditional translation becomes far more apparent.

Superficial analysis of word roots also constitutes one of the fundamental causes of the problem. When the relationship of riqāb to the R-K-B root and the word's other usages in the Quran are not carefully examined, translating the word based on surface-level similarities or traditional convention becomes inevitable.

Conclusion

The rendering of the word riqāb in Surah Muhammad, verse 4 as "neck" in traditional translations contains serious problems from both linguistic and contextual perspectives. When the consistent Quranic usage of the R-K-B root, the established function of a'nāq as the word for "neck," and the internal logic of the verse are considered together, it becomes clear that reading riqāb in the sense of "observation/command post" rests on far firmer ground.

This analysis demonstrates how vital it is in Quranic studies to go beyond mere textual transmission and address together such elements as word roots, patterns of intra-linguistic usage, and contextual coherence. The correct and universal understanding of the Quran's message is only possible through this multi-layered linguistic and contextual rigor.

The Evaluation of the Belief in Grave Punishment and the Angels Munkar-Nakir from a Quranic Perspective

Among the beliefs that profoundly shape individuals' worldviews and behaviors in Islam, the afterlife occupies a central place. Among these beliefs, the punishment of the grave and the questioning by the angels Munkar and Nakir have been subjects of debate in Islamic societies for centuries — often accepted without question, yet simultaneously giving rise to serious concerns. When one traces these beliefs back to their sources, noteworthy differences emerge between the explicit statements of the Quran and traditional narrations. This article examines the punishment of the grave and related beliefs from a Quran-centered perspective, evaluating them in light of relevant verses, logical consistency, and the foundational principles of Islam.

The Quran's View of the Afterlife

The Quran addresses the afterlife comprehensively through two fundamental stages: resurrection and the Day of Judgment. Numerous surahs describe in detail how people will be raised to life, held accountable, and granted eternal existence. Yet the Quran contains no concrete description of the intermediate period between death and resurrection — that is, the life of the grave. Verses 51–52 of Surah Ya-Sin shed light on this matter:

> "The Trumpet is blown, and at once they rush from their graves toward their Lord. They say: 'Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place? This is what the Most Merciful had promised, and the messengers told the truth.'"

The verse conveys that at the blowing of the Trumpet, people will burst forth from their graves and hasten toward their Lord. Notably, this depiction resembles a scene of awakening. Those who are raised ask, "Who has raised us from our sleeping place?" — an expression suggesting that the period between death and resurrection is perceived as though it were a sleep; in other words, no pain or punishment is felt during that interval.

Surah Al-Isra, verse 52, further supports this interpretation:

> "On the Day He calls you, you will respond with His praise, and you will think you remained only a little while."

This verse states that on the Day of Judgment, when people are summoned, they will respond with praise to God and will think they spent only a very brief time in the world. This reveals that the perception of time after death is entirely different from that of the living world. The period between death and resurrection feels, to the deceased, as though it lasted no more than an instant.

A Re-reading of Verses Cited as Evidence for Grave Punishment

In traditional interpretation, certain verses are presented as proof of grave punishment. However, when the context of these verses is examined, it becomes evident that such interpretations are forced.

Surah Ta-Ha, Verses 124–126:

> "Whoever turns away from My remembrance will have a difficult life, and on the Day of Resurrection We will raise him blind. He will say: 'My Lord, why have you raised me blind when I used to see?' It will be said: 'Just as Our signs came to you and you forgot them, so today you are forgotten.'"

These verses describe how those who forget God's remembrance will be raised blind on the Day of Resurrection. The focus is clearly on the Day of Judgment. No connection is made to the grave; the punishment is depicted as occurring on the Day of Judgment, not in the grave. Treating these verses as evidence of grave punishment means going beyond the intended meaning of the text.

Surah At-Tur, Verse 47:

> "Indeed, for the wrongdoers there is a punishment beyond that, though most of them do not know."

This verse is also cited as evidence for grave punishment. Yet its context refers either to the hardships awaiting wrongdoers in worldly life or to the punishment of the hereafter. It contains no content directly pertaining to life in the grave.

Surah Ghafir (Al-Mu'min), Verses 45–46:

> "So Allah protected him from the evils of their plots, and the people of Pharaoh were enveloped in the worst punishment — the Fire. They are exposed to it morning and evening. And on the Day the Hour arrives, it will be said: 'Admit the people of Pharaoh into the harshest punishment.'"

Proponents of grave punishment cite the expression "morning and evening" as evidence for a life in the grave. However, when the full verse is read carefully, the Day of Judgment is mentioned separately and explicitly — suggesting that the earlier phrase must be understood within a different context.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 154, and Surah Al-Imran, Verses 169–171:

These verses state that martyrs are alive before God and are being provided for. This language is specific to martyrs and cannot serve as the basis for a general belief in the life of the grave.

The Limits of the Concept of Barzakh

One significant concept invoked by proponents of grave punishment is barzakh. In Surah Ar-Rahman, verse 20, barzakh is defined as a barrier between two seas that do not mix. In Surah Al-Mu'minun, verses 99–100, it appears as a barrier preventing a deceased person from returning to the world. These Quranic usages indicate that barzakh signifies an "obstacle" or "intermediate zone." However, an independent belief system has been constructed from this concept — a so-called barzakh realm containing questioning, punishment, and reward. The Quran uses barzakh solely to express that the deceased cannot return to the world; extending this concept to lay the groundwork for grave punishment is inconsistent with the Quran's clear message.

Questioning the Belief in Munkar and Nakir in the Light of the Quran

The belief that the angels Munkar and Nakir question and punish the dead in the grave enjoys widespread acceptance in Islamic society. Yet it is a plain fact that these names do not appear in the Quran as names of angels. The word munkar in the Quran is used as an adjective meaning evil or something reprehensible; nakir means "to deny" or "to reject." If these were proper names — that is, the names of angels — they would not need to carry such semantic content. While it is conceivable for angel names to have adjectival origins, the complete absence of these names from the Quran, combined with the fact that this belief rests solely on hadith literature, makes serious scrutiny unavoidable.

Logical and Scientific Contradictions

The belief in grave punishment raises not only theological but also logical and scientific contradictions.

The Decomposition of the Body: The human body decomposes completely after death through biological processes and eventually merges with the earth. How can physical grave punishment be applied to a body that no longer has material existence?

Cremation and Incineration: Those who die by burning or whose bodies are completely destroyed have no physical body to be placed in a grave. In such cases, the physical dimension of grave punishment becomes meaningless.

Organ Transplantation: When a person donates organs, those organs continue to live in other bodies. The question of which body Munkar and Nakir would question lays bare the inconsistency of this belief system.

The Independence of the Soul: Islam accepts that the soul is an entity independent of the body. Nevertheless, grave punishment narratives are largely constructed around bodily suffering. It is difficult to see how punishment inflicted upon a body after the soul has departed can carry any spiritual meaning.

Divine Justice: The belief in grave punishment also conflicts with the principle of divine justice. Consider two people who commit the same sin — one dying in the time of Adam and another dying today. Due to the vastly different lengths of time spent in the grave, the first person would be subjected to punishment far longer than the second. This is incompatible with the understanding of God's absolute justice.

Organ Donation and Escape from God's Punishment: A person who donates their organs and whose body is not buried would, if grave punishment were real, have effectively escaped that punishment. Accepting this scenario implies that humans are capable of preventing God's punishment — a belief that directly contradicts God's omnipotence.

Time Perception and the Transition After Death

The foundational teaching of Islam is that death is not an end but a transition. Evaluated in light of the Quran's indications, this transition opens a door to an entirely different dimension of time and space. A person who dies steps completely outside the temporal experience of the world; whether they died a minute ago or thousands of years ago, all people will be resurrected simultaneously and gathered on the plain of the Day of Judgment. Within this framework, the interval between death and resurrection may feel, to the deceased, as brief as the blink of an eye. The awakening metaphor in Surah Ya-Sin and the emphasis on the brevity of time in Surah Al-Isra support this reality. This picture — which leaves no room for the scenes of questioning and punishment said to occur in the grave — appears far more consistent with the Quran's overall narrative.

The Necessity of Testing Religious Narrations Against the Quran

Throughout history, the addition of various narrations to religious texts has been a phenomenon experienced by many religious traditions. Islam has not been immune to this process. After the passing of our Prophet Muhammad, hadiths were produced for political, cultural, or theological reasons. The narrations concerning grave punishment and Munkar-Nakir contain elements that may be said to feed people's fear of death and to serve the purpose of reinforcing religious obedience.

The fundamental principle of the Quran is clear: the legitimacy of a religious belief can only be confirmed by grounding it in the Quran. Adopting a belief that does not explicitly appear in the Quran as a definitive article of faith conflicts with the Quran-centered understanding at the heart of Islam.

The Quran's message concerning life after death is consistent and clear: death is a transition that carries the human being into a different dimension; resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and eternal life are the fundamental stages of this process. The belief in grave punishment and in Munkar and Nakir, by contrast, finds no direct basis in the Quran; these beliefs rest on traditional narrations and forced interpretations of verses. They carry within them serious problems: logical contradictions, incompatibility with scientific reality, and irreconcilability with the principle of divine justice.

The path to arriving at a true understanding of Islam lies not in remaining in the shadow of narrations, but in turning toward the illuminating message of the Quran. The Quran invites people not through fear, but to think, to reason, and to seek the truth themselves. This invitation necessarily requires that beliefs such as grave punishment — which have no clear basis in the Quran — be subjected to the same critical scrutiny.

A Philological and Theological Analysis of Verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah

The Quran has been regarded since the day of its revelation not merely as a book of worship, but as a legal, moral, and social guide for humanity. However, certain verses have throughout history been approached with a superficial reading, with the deep semantic layers of words, their contextual usage, and the overarching principle of justice in the Quran's spirit overlooked and compressed into narrow frameworks. One of the most striking examples of this narrow reading is verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, which regulates the punishment for theft. The phrase traditionally rendered in translations as "cut off their hands" has for centuries been cited as the Quranic basis for physical amputation. Yet when the original Arabic text of the verse is examined philologically, this interpretation is found to carry serious linguistic problems. Here, verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah will be addressed comprehensively through the lenses of linguistics, contextual analysis, Quranic coherence, and the principle of justice — and this analysis will then be grounded through a contemporary social issue such as illegal electricity use.

The Traditional Reading of the Verse and the Core Problem

Verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah is rendered in the vast majority of translations as follows:

"As for the thief, male or female, cut off their hands as a recompense for what they have earned — a punishment from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

The phrase "cut off their hands" in this translation appears, at a glance, entirely clear and literal. However, from the perspective of Arabic grammar and the internal consistency of the Quran, this interpretation raises serious questions on multiple levels. At the center of the problem lie two core concepts: "aydiyahum" and "qata'a."

Linguistic Analysis of the Word "Yad"

The Distinction Between Singular, Dual, and Plural

Arabic, unlike the vast majority of the world's languages, possesses a grammatical structure known as the "dual" (tathnia) in addition to singular and plural. This structure is used to refer to entities that are exactly two in number, and constitutes one of the most defining grammatical features of Arabic. Within this framework, the forms of the concept of "hand" in Arabic can be listed as follows:

- Yad: One hand (singular)

- Yadā: Two hands (dual — meaning exactly two)

- Ayd: Hands (plural — three or more)

The phrase "aydiyahuma" in verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah is a plural structure referring to two individuals. That is, while two people are being discussed, the plural form meaning "hands" is used rather than the dual form meaning "two hands." As every reader familiar with Arabic knows, a person cannot have more than two hands. Therefore, if the verse were referring to physical hands, the use of the dual form would have been grammatically obligatory. This grammatical choice is not coincidental. Arabic is a language that conveys nuances of meaning with great precision, and the Quran represents the highest literary expression of this language. The use of the plural form "ayd" therefore signals that the word carries a figurative meaning beyond that of a physical hand.

The Figurative Use of "Ayd" in the Quran

Verse 47 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat offers an exceptionally illuminating example on this matter:

"And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are expander."

Here the word "ayd" (rendered as "strength/power") is clearly used in a figurative sense. Since Allah cannot have "hands" in building the heavens, the word evidently carries the meaning of "power, might, strength." This usage demonstrates that the word "ayd" in the Quran is not limited solely to the physical meaning of "hand," but also carries meanings such as "power, influence, authority, support, and responsibility." This linguistic reality necessitates a re-evaluation of the phrase "aydiyahuma" in verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah. The interpretation that a sanction is being spoken of in the sense of "cutting off the power, influence, and social connections" of the thief is linguistically as well as contextually highly coherent.

The Pattern of Usage of the Verb "Qata'a" in the Quran

The other critical concept in the verse is the verb "qata'a," attributed the meaning of "to cut." When the distribution of this verb's usage throughout the Quran is examined, an extremely striking picture emerges. The verb "qata'a" appears in 18 different verses in the Quran. In only 2 of these verses is the word accepted as carrying a physical meaning of cutting. In the remaining 16 verses, the word is used in the following figurative senses:

- To sever a relationship, to cut a tie

- To limit a power, to render it ineffective

- To halt a journey or a process

- To eliminate a connection

One of the rare instances in which the word is used in its physical sense is verse 124 of Surah Al-A'raf:

"I will surely cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides; then I will surely

crucify you all."

This verse concerns Pharaoh's threat directed at the magicians. The context clearly involves physical violence, and "qata'a" is therefore used in its literal sense. However, this exception does not alter the general pattern of the word's usage. On the contrary, it makes the Quranic usage — in which the physical meaning recedes and the figurative meaning dominates — even more apparent. Given the Quran's semantic coherence, there must be a strong linguistic justification for the physical meaning, whose frequency is this low, to be taken as primary in verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah. Yet the available linguistic evidence points to precisely the opposite.

The Parallel Theft Narrative in Surah Yusuf

The internal consistency of the Quran constitutes one of the most reliable sources for interpreting verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah. In this regard, Surah Yusuf provides a concrete example of how the crime of theft is addressed from a Quranic perspective. In verse 75 of Surah Yusuf, a scene is narrated in which Joseph's brothers are accused of theft:

"They said: 'The penalty for it is that he in whose bag it is found — he himself will be its penalty. Thus do we recompense the wrongdoers.'"

The method of punishment adopted here is extraordinarily noteworthy: the person accused of theft is detained with the owner of the stolen object — that is, their freedom is restricted and their movement is constrained. No physical limb is severed. This practice is a form of sanction presented within a directly Quranic framework, conveyed approvingly, and endorsed by the phrase "thus do we recompense." The parallelism between Surah Yusuf and Surah Al-Ma'idah constitutes strong internal evidence that the Quran's approach to the crime of theft concerns not physical amputation but the restriction of the offender's power and freedom of movement.

The Quran's Principle of Justice and Its Philosophy of Punishment

In the Quran, Allah's name "al-'Adl" (the Absolutely Just) appears not as an abstract attribute but as a concrete organizing principle in practice. The concept of justice in the Quran is built upon proportionality, balance, and measure. The punishment for a crime must be proportional to the harm caused by that crime, and the punishment must prioritize the rehabilitation of the offender and the protection of society. Within this framework, it must be seriously questioned whether a punishment as irreversible, permanent, and irreparable as amputation is compatible with the Quranic understanding of justice. For the penal philosophy of the Quran is not founded solely on "retaliation"; it also pursues the goals of "purification" (tazkiya), "rehabilitation," and "reintegration into society."

The Psychological and Social Devastation of Amputation

The consequences that would follow from a physical application of verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah is a matter worthy of examination not only as a theoretical ethical debate but also from the perspectives of human psychology and social science.

Individual Psychological Devastation

The sense of perceiving one's body as a complete whole is one of the cornerstones of human identity. The loss of a limb is not merely a physical loss; it also brings about a fundamental transformation in body image. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and identity crisis are among the well-known psychological consequences of limb loss. The individual whose hand has been cut off sees themselves, when looking in the mirror, as incomplete, stigmatized, and excluded from society. This feeling gradually displaces self-esteem, prevents the person from participating in social spheres, and deeply undermines motivation for life.

Family and Social Disintegration

The roles of the punished individual within the family are also severely affected by this process. The primary livelihood of someone working in a manual trade is eliminated. The sense of being devalued in the eyes of a spouse and children corrodes family relationships. For unmarried individuals, the prospect of marriage is greatly diminished; the "disabled" stigma brings exclusion from many spheres of society.

Return to Crime and Social Conflict

The most dangerous paradox is this: a punishment designed to prevent theft may itself become the very thing that redirects the individual back toward crime. The person whose hand has been cut off has lost the ability to earn a living through manual labor. Economic desperation frequently makes re-offending a necessity. More dangerous still is the profound anger and resentment that develops following the punishment. This anger may over time transform into a motive for revenge, pushing the individual to adopt a hostile attitude toward both themselves and society. The system thus, rather than being legitimized, may produce a person who assumes the role of victim and targets the institutions and society that administered the punishment. At this juncture a profound ethical question arises: which is the greater "theft"? The material value stolen by the thief, or the future, dignity, hope, and possibility of returning to what is right that the punishment takes from that person? Viewed within the framework of the Quran's general principle of justice, it is evident that in place of such irreversible, permanent, and disproportionate punishments, sanctions that are both deterrent and rehabilitative should be preferred. Restricting the individual's social power, seizing assets, directing toward community service, applying economic constraints — all of these methods offer solutions that are both more humane and far more consistent with the spirit of the Quran.

Illegal Electricity Use: A Practical Evaluation Through a Contemporary Example of Theft

At this point, testing the theoretical analysis conducted above against a concrete social problem will bring the subject onto a more comprehensible and practical footing.

The Legal and Moral Dimension of Illegal Electricity Use

Illegal electricity use is the act of obtaining electrical energy through unlawful means by an individual or institution. Carried out through methods such as meter tampering, unauthorized connection to the grid, and bypassing the system, this act constitutes a clear offense of theft both legally and morally. However, a more complex dimension of social harm is involved than in ordinary theft: while in individual theft there is only one victim, illegal electricity use indirectly harms thousands of people. The cost of losses and leakages in the electricity distribution system is reflected in the bills of legal users. This offense therefore creates a collective victimization that harms both electricity producers and society as a whole. Beyond this, illegal electricity use also carries serious safety risks. Uninformed interference with electrical installations that require expertise can give rise to life-threatening dangers such as fire, explosion, and electrocution. Energy losses accumulate at the national scale into significant economic burdens.

Application of Verse 38 of Al-Ma'idah to This Problem

When we evaluate verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah with proper understanding, it becomes entirely clear that the appropriate Quranic sanction for a theft offense such as illegal electricity use cannot be physical amputation. The principle of "cutting off power" envisioned by the verse offers an extremely meaningful and applicable framework in the context of this offense:

- Eliminating the offender's capacity to gain unauthorized access to the system again — in other words, "cutting their power" in the technical sense

- Reversing their unjust gain by seizing assets

- Imposing a community service obligation, requiring them to return the harm done to society

- Subjecting them to licensed technician training, laying the groundwork for knowledge to be used productively through legal rather than illegal channels

All of these sanctions are both deterrent and rehabilitative, and consistent with the spirit of Quranic justice. By contrast, applying a physical amputation to this person's hand neither solves the problem of illegal electricity use nor establishes justice in any real sense. On the contrary, it destroys the individual's capacity to work, placing a new burden on society, while failing in any way to address the true roots of the offense — poverty, lack of awareness, economic inequality.

The Correct Translation and Final Interpretation

In light of the philological analysis, contextual examination, and evaluation of Quranic coherence conducted above, a more accurate rendering of verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah may be proposed as follows:

"As for the thief, male or female, cut off their power as a deterrent punishment from Allah for what they have done. Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

This translation reflects both the linguistic reality of the word "ayd" and the dominant

figurative usage of the verb "qata'a" throughout the Quran. It is also in complete harmony with the Quran's general principles of justice, rehabilitation, and social order.

Verse 38 of Surah Al-Ma'idah has throughout history been a victim of superficial reading and presented as the justification for physical amputation. Yet when a careful linguistic analysis of the verse's original Arabic text, the pattern of usage of its words across the Quran, the parallel theft narrative in Surah Yusuf, and the Quran's fundamental philosophy of justice are evaluated together, an entirely different and far more coherent picture emerges. The verse presents a framework of sanction envisioning the restriction of the thief's power, social influence, material means, and capacity to re-offend. This interpretation represents a justice that preserves the individual's dignity, safeguards the integrity of society, addresses the roots of crime, and takes rehabilitation as its foundation. To understand the Quran correctly requires reading each of its words with deep philological and theological care. This understanding offers a vision of justice powerful enough to simultaneously uphold the human dignity of the offender and the rights of society. Addressing contemporary social problems such as illegal electricity use from this perspective opens the door to solutions that are both more effective and more humane.

The Issue of Abrogation (Naskh) and the Abrogated (Mansukh) in the Quran

The concepts of naskh and mansukh have been among the most debated topics in Islam for centuries, giving rise to many differing opinions. The word "naskh" in Arabic means "erasing," "eliminating," or "annulling," while "mansukh" means "erased" or "invalidated." In the classical exegetical tradition, these concepts were used to support the claim that Quranic verses nullify one another's rulings. However, this claim requires careful examination from both linguistic and contextual perspectives. When one considers the Quran's own internal consistency, God's promise of preservation, and the complementary structure of its verses, it becomes clear that the claim of "intra-Quranic abrogation" is fraught with serious problems.

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:106 and the Meaning of the Word "Ayah"

The verse most frequently cited in support of abrogation claims is Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 106:

"We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth one better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things competent?"

To properly understand this verse, one must first grasp the multidimensional meaning of the word "ayah" in the Quran. In the Quran, "ayah" does not mean only "a verse in the book." It is also used to mean miracle (for example, the signs shown to Pharaoh in Surah Al-A'raf 7:133), divine sign, proof, argument, document, message, prophethood, and the mission of a messenger. Indeed, the singular form of "ayah" in the Quran corresponds in many places to one of these broader meanings. From the context, it is clear that what is meant by "ayah" in this verse is prophethood and divine mission. Another noteworthy point is that the word "ruling" (hukm) does not appear in the verse at all. Although some translations have inserted this word into

the text, examining the verse's original linguistic structure reveals that it carries no meaning of "annulment of a ruling" or "abrogation." To properly understand the verse, it is linguistically far more consistent to interpret it not as the cancellation of a legal ruling, but as a miracle, proof, or divine mission being completed in a given period and giving way to a more comprehensive message.

Contextual Reading: Al-Baqarah 2:105–107

To understand verse 106 of Surah Al-Baqarah, it must be read together with verses 105 and 107. In this context, it becomes clear that the subject concerns the People of the Book — particularly the Jews who resisted the revelation of the Quran. God is explaining that previous revelations followed one another throughout history, and each new mission superseded the one before it. The "ayah" in question therefore refers not to a verse within the Quran itself, but to the prophethood sent across history. The majority of classical commentaries overlooked this context and presented the matter as a contradiction and annulment relationship between Quranic verses — laying the groundwork for a deeply rooted misunderstanding.

The Quran's Preservation and the Contradiction of the Abrogation Claim

One of the most fundamental problems with the abrogation claim is that it directly contradicts the guarantee the Quran gives regarding its own existence and preservation. In Surah Al-Hijr 15:9, God says:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, it is We who are its guardian."

This verse is a divine guarantee that the Quran is protected from all alteration, reduction, and corruption. If the rulings of certain verses have been annulled or some of them caused to be forgotten, the question of what this protection actually covers inevitably arises. Moreover, all verses said to have been abrogated still appear in the Mushaf. This itself reveals that the doctrine of abrogation is internally inconsistent: if a verse's ruling was truly annulled, why does it still remain in the Quran?

Evaluation of Verses Said to Be "Abrogated"

1. Verses on Khamr (Intoxicants)

One of the most frequently cited examples in the classical abrogation framework concerns the verses on khamr (intoxicants). Surah Al-Baqarah 2:219 states that the sin of intoxicants outweighs their benefit; Surah An-Nisa 4:43 commands that one not approach prayer while intoxicated; and Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:90 describes these substances as an abomination from the work of Satan and commands that they be avoided. The claim that these verses abrogate one another is baseless upon careful examination. These verses are complementary statements addressing the same issue from different angles. The balance of benefit and harm, the effect of intoxication on prayer, and the general moral prohibition are not rulings that cancel each other out — they explain and reinforce one another.

An important point also emerges when tracing the semantic trajectory of the word

"khamr." Derived from a root meaning "to cover," the term originally encompassed a broad range of mind-altering substances. Notably, in the Kutadgu Bilig dated to 1069, the word is used to refer to all alcoholic drinks, while in the Codex Cumanicus of 1303, the meaning had narrowed to wine alone. This linguistic shift shows that the word underwent semantic narrowing over time, while its original use in the Quran is considerably broader. These verses thus form a whole that layers Islam's stance against all substances that impair reason and will.

2. Al-Anfal 8:65–66: The Ratio of Believers to Unbelievers in Battle

In Surah Al-Anfal 8:65, it is stated that twenty patient believers will overcome two hundred; in verse 66, this ratio is reduced to one to two (one hundred against two hundred). This has been interpreted as abrogation — i.e., that the second verse nullifies the first. However, this is a problematic interpretation that insufficiently accounts for the context of the verses.

These two verses are not rulings that cancel each other out; rather, they present two distinct realities corresponding to different psychological and sociological states of the Muslim community. Verse 65 expresses the high potential under ideal conditions, while verse 66 articulates a concession (rukhsah) given in light of existing weakness. The 1:10 ratio in verse 65 represents the extraordinary resilience of a community possessing high consciousness, deep understanding, and strong commitment — comparable to the outstanding performance of a highly motivated and determined core group at the beginning of a cause. The emphasis on comprehension (fiqh) in the verse shows that this community's qualitative superiority over a scattered and purposeless mass stems from its unity of consciousness and intent. Verse 66, with the words "Allah knows that there is weakness among you," points to the reality that this high-intensity state of motivation cannot be sustained indefinitely. As a community expands, individual responsibilities and the natural course of life come into play, leading to a balancing of the initial high energy. The 1:2 ratio thus represents not a regression, but a sustainable equilibrium.

There is no relationship of abrogation between these two verses. On the contrary, the Quran provides a dynamic framework that accounts for the different stages of social struggle. Verse 65 sets the ideal threshold a community of high faith and motivation can reach; verse 66 describes the realistic resilience of a broader and more normalized society. Both verses therefore remain valid. Depending on the psychological and social state of the community, one of these measures comes to the fore. This is not the annulment of a ruling (abrogation) — it is contextual flexibility in application.

3. Al-Baqarah 2:180: The Verse on Bequest

In Surah Al-Baqarah 2:180, it is stated that leaving a bequest for parents and close relatives at the time of death is a requirement of piety toward God. It is argued that this verse was abrogated by the establishment of inheritance shares in Surah An-Nisa 4:11–12. Yet these two verses do not contradict each other — they complement one another. The verses in An-Nisa establish the compulsory inheritance shares within a legal framework. The bequest, on the other hand, governs a separate

institution: the individual's right to dispose of property voluntarily, beyond these mandatory shares. Furthermore, the phrase "after any bequest and debt" in Surah An-Nisa 4:12 clearly shows that the bequest is a right that must be taken into account before the distribution of the estate. The bequest verse is therefore not abrogated; rather, it retains its place within the inheritance system and completes it.

4. Al-Mujadila 58:12–13: Charity Before Private Consultation with the Prophet

In Surah Al-Mujadila 58:12, Muslims seeking a private audience with the Prophet are instructed to give charity beforehand. In verse 13, this practice is brought to an end. The classical view holds that the second verse abrogates the first. Here too, however, the assessment is mistaken. Verse 13 removes the obligation of charity but does not nullify the ruling entirely. The verse still appears in the Quran, and this is proof that it continues to be part of the divine word. God making a practice easier does not mean that verse has been abrogated. This is a concession and the abandonment of a temporary application — not abrogation.

The Claim That Quranic Verses Can Be Abrogated by Hadith

Another particularly noteworthy dimension of the abrogation debate is that some classical scholars maintained that Quranic verses can be abrogated by hadith. This view is deeply problematic from an epistemological standpoint. If such a door were opened, every one of the Quran's 6,236 verses could be systematically sidelined by citing a narration or a fabricated report as justification. This approach directly contradicts the very principle that places the Quran under divine protection. The Quran is a revelation preserved and validated not by human speech, but by divine will.

The Contradiction Between the Abrogation Claim and the Quran's Core Principles

The claim that there is abrogation in the Quran directly contradicts four foundational principles the Quran itself declares:

First, the Quran explicitly states that it contains no internal contradiction. Surah An-Nisa 4:82 says: "Then do they not reflect upon the Quran? If it had been from other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction." A structure in which verses nullify one another is incompatible with this principle.

Second, in Surah Hud 11:1, the Quran's verses are described as "muhkam" — that is, firm and unshakeable. For a muhkam verse's ruling to be subsequently annulled contradicts this very attribute.

Third, God has promised to preserve His book. Verses whose rulings have supposedly been annulled but whose text still remains in the Mushaf render this understanding of preservation meaningless.

Fourth, the principle that all Quranic verses serve an explanatory and complementary function — that verses are clarified by other verses — remains in force.

Since the Quran describes itself as "muhkam" and "free of contradiction," what should be sought is not a change of ruling but a multi-layered meaning and

contextual application. The claim of abrogation and the abrogated in the Quran thus dissolves upon careful linguistic, contextual, and principled examination. Surah Al-Baqarah 2:106 does not describe an intra-Quranic abrogation, but rather the renewal of prophethood throughout history and the wisdom behind God's sending revelation to different communities at different times. All verses said to be "abrogated," when read in context, turn out not to cancel each other at all — but rather to explain and complete one another. The Quran itself clearly declares that it is a consistent, firm, and preserved book. The abrogation claim, by contrast, positions the Quran as a contradictory, variable, and legally revocable text. This is an approach that directly contradicts the Quran's own principles. The correct method is to read each verse within its own context, with the original meanings of the language, and with due regard for the Quran's wholeness. When this is done, it becomes abundantly clear that the alleged contradictions and examples of abrogation actually reflect a profound harmony and the multi-layered expression of divine wisdom.

Preaching in Islam: Principles, Responsibilities, and Ethical Standards

Islam is not merely a system of individual belief and worship; it also carries within it the mission of conveying a universal message to all of humanity. This mission is called tabligh (preaching/conveying). Tabligh refers to the responsibility of communicating God's religion to people in a manner and style that pleases Him. However, this responsibility must be fulfilled not haphazardly, but within a framework of specific principles and ethical standards. For the manner in which the message is delivered is just as important as the truth of the message itself. Throughout history, the messengers strove to carry out this duty in the finest way. Their common ground was sincerity, patience, self-sacrifice, and placing God's pleasure above all else.

Seeking God's Pleasure: The Foundation of Tabligh

At the heart of tabligh must lie the intention of earning God's pleasure alone. Worldly concerns such as material gain, social prestige, or personal satisfaction tarnish the purity of this duty. Throughout history, many messengers placed tabligh at the center of their lives without asking anything in return from their people. The Holy Quran expresses this truth as follows:

"Follow those who ask no reward of you, and who are rightly guided." (Surah Ya-Sin, 21)

This verse makes it clear that performing tabligh solely for God is not merely an obligation, but also a sign of being on the right path. The preacher is duty-bound to take every step in the light of this awareness. As people sense his sincerity, the message will take deeper root, and an invitation that speaks to hearts — rather than through coercion or pressure — will take hold.

Remaining Hopeful and Knowing You Are Only an Instrument

One of the greatest dangers on the path of tabligh is falling into despair. The rejection of the call by people, hostile responses, or indifference should not discourage the preacher. For guidance, ultimately, is in God's providence; the

preacher's role is nothing more than being an instrument.

"Do not despair of God's mercy. Indeed, none despairs of God's mercy except the disbelieving people." (Surah Yusuf, 87)

This divine warning should equip the preacher with fresh hope and trust in God at all times. Moreover, one who knows that guidance is a divine blessing will, in moments of apparent failure, turn not to self-blame but to seeking a more patient and wiser path.

"Had We willed, We could have given every soul its guidance. But the word from Me has come into effect: I will surely fill Hell with jinn and people all together." (Surah As-Sajdah, 13)

While this verse reminds us of the absoluteness of divine will, it also teaches the preacher humility and submission. No matter how capable or sincere a preacher may be, it is God alone who turns hearts. This truth is for him both a release from a certain burden of responsibility and a profound source of peace.

Sacrifice in the Path of God: Being Ready to Pay a Price

A true preacher must prepare in advance for the difficulties, criticisms, and sacrifices he will encounter on this path. Islamic history is full of countless examples. Our Prophet Muhammad and his companions were exiled from their homes, lost their material possessions, and even risked their lives for the sake of tabligh. The strongest divine foundation for this sacrifice is the following verse:

"Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for that they will have Paradise." (Surah At-Tawbah, 111)

A preacher who acts with the spirit pointed to by this verse can meet worldly losses with great freedom of heart. For he has set out with the awareness that the greatest gain lies with God. Sacrifice is both the source of motivation for tabligh and its most powerful proof of credibility. People wish to see a life that has been lived, beyond mere words. For this reason, the preacher's own way of life carries a far more powerful message than anything he says.

Sincerity and Consistency: Where Words and Actions Meet

One of the most fragile points of tabligh is the gap between speech and action. A preacher who does not live what he preaches gradually loses his credibility and may even harm the cause. Sincerity and consistency are therefore among the preacher's fundamental moral qualities.

"O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do?" (Surah As-Saff, 2)

This verse is not merely a warning; it is also a call to transformation. People read the life of a preacher — they evaluate him as a human being before listening to his books or speeches. A preacher whose words and life align is the most powerful caller to faith. Sincerity refers to a stance that comes from the depths of the heart, neither calculated nor showy. Consistency requires that this stance not erode over time and

that it endure in both ease and hardship.

Respect and Tolerance: Knowing How to Live with Difference

Islam is founded on persuasion, not coercion; on free will, not compulsion. Treating people of different beliefs with respect is a fundamental ethical principle of tabligh. This respect does not mean compromising one's own faith; on the contrary, it is a reflection of the universal dignity that Islam accords to humanity.

"There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness has been clearly distinguished from error." (Surah Al-Baqarah, 256)

This principle reveals one of the most original and distinctive characteristics of the Islamic call: the invitation is made to hearts, and hearts can be won not by force, but by beauty. Responding to criticism not with anger but with knowledge and patience; listening to opposing views without belittling them; and answering sincere questions with respect — these are the concrete manifestations of the preacher's understanding of tolerance.

Patience and Determination: A Long Journey

Tabligh is not a duty to be carried out with the expectation of short-term results. Looking at the lives of the messengers, we see that they preached to their people for years, even decades, and at times found a response from only a very limited number. Yet they neither lost their patience nor abandoned their cause. This determination reveals the depth of spirit within tabligh.

"Be patient; indeed, the promise of God is truth." (Surah Ar-Rum, 60)

Patience is not passive waiting, but active resistance. Not yielding in the face of hardship, gritting one's teeth through disappointment, and seeing every obstacle as a new opportunity for growth — these are the indicators of a preacher's spiritual resilience. Deep faith in God's promise forms the most powerful source of energy throughout this process.

A Cheerful Face and Good Treatment: The Key to Hearts

People first accept the person, then listen to his message. This psychological reality makes clear how carefully the preacher must act when building relationships with people. A harsh tone closes already-shut doors even tighter; a smiling face and gentle words, on the other hand, often break through even the thickest walls.

"Take to forgiveness, command what is good, and turn away from the ignorant." (Surah Al-A'raf, 199)

This divine counsel advises the preacher to embrace three fundamental attitudes together: knowing how to forgive, keeping away from idle disputes, and in every situation resting upon a moral foundation. Responding to evil with goodness is not merely a virtue — it becomes an exceptionally effective tabligh strategy. For an unexpected act of kindness often leaves a deep question mark within a person: "Why does this person behave this way?"

Producing Written and Visual Content: Speaking the Language of the Age

Today, the field of tabligh is not confined to mosques, courses, or face-to-face conversations. The digital age has placed upon the preacher both a tremendous opportunity and a serious responsibility. Social media platforms, blogs, digital magazines, and video channels — through which millions of people access information — make it possible for the message to reach far wider audiences. To use these channels effectively, the preacher must both develop his content-creation skills and accurately read the language and needs of his audience. Written content continues to be one of the most effective tools of tabligh, with the advantage of leaving a lasting impression, being read repeatedly, and being shared. Visual content, meanwhile, makes abstract concepts concrete and increases the comprehensibility of the message. Yet even in digital tabligh, the fundamental principles remain unchanged: truthfulness, sincerity, respect, and God's pleasure. Not compromising these principles under the pressure of speed and popularity that social media imposes constitutes one of today's preacher's most critical tests.

Tabligh Is a Journey

Tabligh is not a duty performed once and then completed — it is a lifelong journey. This journey can be undertaken with a spirit that takes God's pleasure as its compass, patience as its provision, sincerity as its shield, and good character as its weapon. A preacher's success is not measured by the number of people he wins over, but by his fidelity to God. A preacher who knows that guidance rests solely in God's hands is both free and at peace. He does the best he can and leaves the rest to his Lord. For the greatest victory is not to conquer hearts, but to be able to stand before God and say, "I strove to fulfill my duty properly."

True tabligh must be built on the axis of sincerity, sacrifice, patience, and respect; it must take root on the bridge between word and deed; and at every step, it must take only God's pleasure as its compass. Only then does tabligh cease to be a burden and become one of the deepest sources of fulfillment the heart can know.

The Deep Chasm Between the Sharia of the Quran and the Sharia of the Hadith

"Sharia" in Arabic means "the path leading to a water source." This etymology suggests that at its core, the word points to a life-giving, nourishing, and purifying way. Yet throughout Islamic history, the content of this word has drifted from its origins, being transformed into a symbol of a restrictive, dogmatic, and antiquated worldview. Today, when many people hear the word "sharia," the image that comes to mind is a system in which women are oppressed, arts are banned, science is obstructed, and individual freedoms are disregarded. Yet this image does not arise from the portrait drawn by the Quran, but from an understanding shaped over centuries by hadith, traditional interpretations, and political circumstances. This essay examines the fundamental differences between the conception of sharia put forward by the Quran itself and the perception of sharia constructed by the hadith and traditional exegesis tradition — and questions why and how the rational, scientific, democratic, and love-based message at the heart of Islam has been pushed to the margins.

Two Different Understandings of Sharia

In Islamic history, the concept of sharia has taken shape on two different grounds. The first is an understanding rooted directly in the Quranic verses, centering on universal principles. The second is an understanding shaped by hadith literature, legal schools, and traditional scholarly interpretations — one that shows great variation by era and geography.

The defining feature of Quranic sharia is that it grants human beings reason and free will. The Quran repeatedly asks: "Will you not reason?", "Will you not reflect?", "Do you not see?" These questions position the believer not as a passive follower, but as an active, thinking, and questioning subject. The prohibitions in the Quran are clear, explicit, and limited. The principle of "Do not forbid what is lawful" is a foundational maxim of the Quran. The sharia of hadith, however, has historically constructed a far longer list of prohibitions, bringing within the scope of ban many areas that the Quran explicitly permits or does not address at all. Over time, this expansion laid the groundwork for a departure from the essence of religion and for the beginning of decline — spiritual as well as worldly — in Muslim societies.

Attitudes Toward Science and Knowledge

The Quran's very first command is "Read!" This injunction does not merely mean reading religious texts; it encompasses the entire pursuit of knowledge aimed at understanding the universe, humanity, and the mysteries of existence. The Quran repeatedly presents the creation of the heavens and the earth, the growth of plants, the movement of stars, and human anatomy as objects of tafakkur — deep contemplation. From the Quran's perspective, the scientist is the person who unravels the secrets of the universe God created, thereby coming to understand both the world and the Creator more fully.

Yet looking at certain periods of Islamic history, it becomes strikingly clear how this understanding was inverted. The Istanbul Observatory, founded by Taqi al-Din ibn Maʿruf, was demolished in 1580 under pressure from the religious authorities of the time. The eras in which scientific inquiry was equated with bid'ah (innovation) or irreligion correspond precisely to the eras in which the Islamic world rapidly fell behind the West. In Andalusia, the works of scholars engaged in philosophy and science were burned and their thinkers sent into exile — Ibn Rushd (Averroes) being the most striking example.

This picture has no connection whatsoever to the Quran. The Quran exalts the scientist. It declares that "of His servants, only those with knowledge truly fear God" (Fatir, 28). It defines knowledge as the key to emergence from darkness into light. To attribute this historical fear and hostility toward science to the Quran is a profound injustice done to the text itself.

Women, Education, and Societal Potential

The Quran regards women and men as equals in moral responsibility. The verses of Surah Al-Ahzab, which enumerate believing men and believing women*, *devout men

and devout women in consecutive pairs, lay bare the balance in religion's view of gender. Nowhere in the Quran is it commanded that women be deprived of the right to education, excluded from social life, or confined solely to domestic roles.

In contrast, certain understandings rooted in traditional hadith interpretations have framed women's participation in work, education, and public life as something to be discouraged or outright prohibited. Restrictions such as "a woman must stay at home," "a woman's voice is 'awrah," "a woman cannot travel alone" are nourished not by the spirit of the Quran, but by seventh-century Arab customs and the hadith interpretations of a particular era.

The social cost of this approach has been immense. Keeping half of a society's population outside the mechanisms of education, production, and decision-making means halving that society's intellectual and economic potential. When one looks at the Muslim-majority regions that have made the least progress today, the direct correlation between women's social standing and this backwardness becomes evident. Returning to the value the Quran assigns to women is not merely a matter of justice — it is equally a matter of development.

Emotional Balance, Happiness, and the Joy of Living

The Quran does not present life as a place of burden and pain. The verse "God intends ease for you, not hardship..." (Al-Baqarah, 185) encapsulates the fundamental spirit of religion. The Quran does not make it obligatory to mourn, drown in excessive grief, or forbid taking pleasure in life; on the contrary, it takes as its foundation that human beings should live peacefully and in balance in this world as well. In many verses, worldly blessings are presented as God's bounty, and making use of these blessings is encouraged.

Yet certain understandings derived from hadith have positioned weeping as a requirement of worship; some narrations even advise, "If you cannot weep, act as though you are weeping." The prevailing notion that music is forbidden, that laughter is excessive, and that joy must be measured has instilled a gloomy, inward-looking state of mind in the collective psychology of Muslim societies. The perpetual state of repentance built upon a sense of sinfulness within the Sufi tradition has eroded the individual's self-confidence and life energy.

The Quran's call is different: "Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of God which He has produced for His servants, and the good things of provision?" (Al-A'raf, 32). This verse openly declares that forbidding the beauties of life is itself contrary to the will of God. A genuine Quranic sharia guides human beings not toward guilt and suffering, but toward gratitude and balance.

Art, Aesthetics, and Human Functionality

Art is one of humanity's most deeply-rooted forms of expression. In the Quran, the story of Solomon (Saba, 13) explicitly mentions that the jinn made "statues" for him, and this act is not accompanied by any negative characterization. This is an extremely important clue for understanding the Quran's stance toward art and

aesthetics.

However, narrations in hadith literature that strictly prohibit the depiction of living beings have profoundly influenced the Islamic artistic tradition, leading to sculpture — and to a large extent painting — being pushed outside the bounds of society. Although certain bridges were built, such as Sufi art and the miniature tradition, the musawwir (painter) in many periods and geographies was forced to confront social exclusion.

The long-term consequences of this have been deeply destructive. Art is not merely an aesthetic activity; it is a society's capacity for self-expression, self-questioning, and self-transformation. The deep connection between the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and modern democracies and art is no coincidence. A civilization that excludes art from society has also excluded its own functionality. An understanding of Islam grounded in the spirit of the Quran regards human functionality as one of the greatest gifts God has given humanity, and encourages the development of this gift.

Unity, Democracy, and Social Solidarity

Verse 103 of Surah Al-Imran commands Muslims to hold fast together to the rope of God and not be divided. This verse makes clear how central a value unity is in Islam. Surah Al-Shura states that Muslims conduct their affairs through shura (mutual consultation) among themselves — a statement deeply consonant with the fundamental spirit of modern democratic understanding.

Yet within the hadith tradition, the idea that "disagreement is a mercy" has over time laid the groundwork for the legitimization of sectarianism, factionalism, and social fragmentation. The Sunni-Shia conflict, sectarian wars, the tradition of takfir, and disputes over "true Islam" have for centuries been among the most effective tools for setting Muslim communities against one another. When one considers that a significant portion of the conflicts in the Islamic world today are fueled by religious identity, the depth of the wounds left by this fragmentation becomes apparent.

The Quran's call is clear: not division but unity, not competition but solidarity, not exclusion but embrace. A genuine Quranic sharia takes as its foundation not the erection of sectarian walls, but coming together around shared human values. Democracy, in this sense, is in deep harmony with the Quran's principle of consultation — for both locate power not in a single authority or interpretation, but in the collective reason and will of the community.

It must be stated plainly: all hadith must be rejected. All hadith were fabricated after the death of our Prophet Muhammad.

Returning to the True Path

Quranic sharia is a path that liberates human beings. Centering reason, science, love, art, unity, and justice, this path offers a universal framework valid in every era and geography. The hadith- and tradition-based understanding of sharia, by contrast, has presented the constraints of a particular history, culture, and political context as

universal religious rulings — and in doing so has narrowed the Quran's liberating message and driven Muslim societies into decline, both worldly and spiritual.

It is possible to see the roots of the scientific, political, economic, and moral crises faced by the Muslim world today in this very tension. The solution is neither to imitate the West nor to abandon Islam. The solution is to return to the very foundations the Quran itself lays down: reason, science, justice, unity, and love.

The path to the water source may lie buried beneath centuries of accumulated rubble. But that path is still there. And the Quran provides all the light needed to find it.

Jizya: War Reparation or Tax?

Throughout the history of Islamic law, many concepts have been transmitted either stripped of their original context or shaped by interpretations molded by the political conditions of their era. Jizya is chief among these concepts. Commonly defined in classical fiqh literature as "a poll tax collected from non-Muslims," jizya continues to be a subject of debate both in Western academic circles and within the Islamic world itself. Yet whether this definition accurately reflects the concept's original context in the Quran and its Arabic linguistic roots remains a serious question.

To properly understand any concept, one must first examine its linguistic origins. The word jizya derives from the Arabic root ج-ز-ي (j-z-y). In the Arabic lexicographical tradition, this root carries the meanings of "to recompense, to pay a return for an action, to reward, or to penalize." In Ibn Manzur's encyclopedic dictionary Lisān al-ʿArab, this root is explained as follows: for a person to receive the return of their action — whether good or evil, to be met with its equivalent. This linguistic reality is highly significant. Jizya contains none of the words used for "tax" in Arabic — neither darība nor kharāj. Given that these separate words exist in Arabic for the concept of taxation, the Quran's choice of jizya — a word evoking "recompense" and "compensation" — reveals that the concept is reparatory in nature rather than fiscal. The word's semantic field, on its own, indicates that jizya is not an ordinary taxation mechanism.

The Historical and Contextual Background of Sūrat al-Tawba

Sūrat al-Tawba occupies a special place within the process of Quranic revelation. Revealed in the ninth year of the Hijra, in the aftermath of the Tabuk campaign, this surah took shape in an atmosphere in which Muslims were confronted with hypocrites, treaty-breaking polytheist groups, and the uncertainties of wartime. To properly understand the surah's context, the following historical background must be kept in mind: following the conquest of Mecca, various peace treaties had been concluded between the Muslims and Arab tribes. These agreements, which can be summarized as a commitment to refrain from fighting during the sacred months, had created a balanced environment grounded in mutual trust. However, certain polytheist tribes had unilaterally violated these treaties — attacking Muslims despite the sacred months, turning a blind eye to assaults on their allied communities, or actively supporting such attacks. Sūrat al-Tawba was revealed in precisely this atmosphere of betrayal. The surah bears the character of a legal and moral response

to the successive breaking of a series of agreements.

Verse 4 of Sūrat al-Tawba: The Cornerstone of the Justice Principle

In order to understand the matter of jizya in Sūrat al-Tawba, verse 4 must be read carefully before verse 29, for it articulates the surah's foundational justice principle in clear and unambiguous terms:

> "Excepting those polytheists with whom you have a treaty and who have not failed you in anything nor supported anyone against you — fulfill your treaty with them to the end of their term. Indeed, Allah loves the righteous." (al-Tawba, 9:4)

This verse clearly demonstrates that the surah is not a declaration of indiscriminate hostility. On the contrary, the fundamental criterion here is not whether a person is Muslim, but whether they have remained faithful to their agreement. For polytheist communities that have fully honored their treaty obligations and committed no act of hostility, the Quran commands that peace be maintained and the pledge upheld until the treaty's expiration. This distinction is decisive. From the standpoint of Islamic law, the obligation of jizya is not a sanction imposed simply for the "condition of not being Muslim." On the contrary, the obligation is confined to those parties who have broken treaties, engaged in acts of hostility, or taken up arms against Muslims.

Verse 29 of Sūrat al-Tawba: The Legal Framework of Jizya

Verse 29 of the surah is the verse in which jizya appears directly, and in traditional interpretations it is most often conveyed stripped of its context:

> "Fight those among the People of the Book who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not adopt the religion of truth — until they pay the jizya willingly while they are subdued." (al-Tawba, 9:29)

This verse has several critical dimensions.

First, the question of the intended audience. This verse is not a universal declaration of war against all People of the Book; it is a concrete legal response to a specific act of aggression.

Second, the layers of meaning in the phrase "paying with their own hands." The phrase rendered as "until they pay the jizya willingly" is constructed in Arabic with the structure ʿan yadin. This structure carries both the physical meaning of "paying in person" and the connotation of "paying out of submission rather than strength." Aggression that gives rise to war carries a price, and that price is the compensation of the damage caused by war through reparations.

Third, the matter of sāghirūn. The expression sāghirūn, rendered as "while they are subdued," describes the power imbalance produced by the outcome of war and situates within a legal framework the obligation of the defeated party to pay reparations — a normal component of the law of war. This expression does not consign a people to permanent humiliation; rather, it reflects the actual outcome of

war and the legal order established in its aftermath.

Jizya, Zakat, and Tax: The Fundamental Distinction Between Concepts

When examined within the framework of Islamic law, the difference between taxation and jizya is not merely terminological but structural in nature. Zakat is a financial act of worship made obligatory upon Muslims; every Muslim possessing wealth above a certain threshold (nisāb) is required to fulfill this obligation. Kharāj is an agricultural tax levied on the use of land in conquered territories and is a property-based obligation that can be applied to both Muslims and the People of the Book. Jizya belongs to neither of these categories. Jizya is not a permanent fiscal order but a reparatory measure specific to a particular state of war, the parties to that war, and the harm caused by it. To equate a concept whose root means "to recompense" with an ongoing tax system is problematic both linguistically and legally.

This distinction is also made concrete when one looks at historical practice. A large portion of Christian and Jewish communities living under Muslim governance — particularly in regions with no history of hostility and during periods of peace — were not subjected to jizya. On the other hand, the fact that some Muslim rulers transformed jizya into a permanent tax system represents a historical deviation in practice and does not align with the Quran's original principle.

Jizya Within the Framework of Islamic Laws of War

When the foundational principles of Islamic laws of war are examined, jizya is seen to be in full harmony with them. Islamic law justifies war along defensive rather than offensive lines. Initiating aggression is forbidden; when hostility is directed at one, defense becomes obligatory. Once war comes to an end, accepting a peace offer is the rule, and no obstacle to concluding a peace treaty is recognized. In light of these principles, jizya is not a tax systematically extracted from peoples under occupation; it is a temporary obligation — one that finds its meaning in the conclusion of war — by which the party responsible for causing the conflict compensates for the damage it has inflicted. When war is eliminated, when hostility ceases, and when a new peace treaty is concluded between the parties, the legal basis for jizya likewise disappears. This understanding aligns with the fundamental stance of Islam toward war and peace: war is not an end but a means, resorted to only in necessity, with a return to peace required as quickly as possible. Jizya is the legal manifestation of this understanding — neither a permanent system of discrimination nor a taxation mechanism based on religious identity.

The Problematic Dimensions of Traditional Interpretations

The definition of jizya in traditional fiqh literature as a poll tax collected from the ahl al-dhimma was shaped over time by the convergence of various factors. Chief among these is the reflection onto the legal framework of the conquest and governance practices of the Abbasid era — the period in which Islamic law was largely codified. The fiscal arrangements applied in conquered territories gradually became normalized, and these norms were subsequently sought to be grounded in the Quran through a retrospective search for legal legitimacy. Furthermore, the

political climate of the period in which hadith and legal opinions were compiled made detailed arrangements binding the People of the Book to a particular legal status a necessity. The *ahl al-dhimma* status that took shape in this era acquired an institutional character that went beyond the Quran's original approach. Yet it cannot be said that this historical institutional development corresponds precisely to the meaning the Quran invested in the concept of jizya. The historical practice of a concept does not determine that concept's semantic field in the Quran. On the contrary, the Quran is the criterion by which historical practice is to be evaluated.

A Conceptual Reading

When jizya is assessed through the lens of the Quran's linguistic structure, the historical context of Sūrat al-Tawba, and the foundational principles of Islamic laws of war, it emerges as a concept far more complex and legally distinctive than a mere instrument of taxation. The idea at its core is this: those who remain faithful to their treaty are protected; those who engage in acts of hostility are held liable to compensate for the harm they have caused. This understanding demonstrates that Islam prioritizes peace and regards war as a last resort — a necessary means of defense to which recourse is made only under compulsion and from which a return to peace must be sought at the earliest opportunity.

Properly understanding the concept is not merely an academic matter. This understanding directly concerns Islamic law's view of justice, peace, and human dignity. To overcome the conceptual confusion generated by decontextualized interpretations, it is indispensable to return both to the Quranic text and to the historical environment in which that text was revealed.

The Concept of "Yada" in Surah Al-Masad: A Critique of Abu Lahab's Order

Being the 111th chapter of the Holy Quran, Surah Al-Masad — despite consisting of only five verses — has earned a remarkably significant place in Islam due to the depth of meaning it carries and its historical context. The expression "تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ" found in the first verse of the surah — traditionally translated as "May the hands of Abu Lahab perish" — may appear at first glance to be a personal curse. Yet when the semantic universe of the word "yada" (يَدَا) in the Arabic language is examined, it becomes clear that this expression contains a far more comprehensive social and political critique.

In Arabic, the word "yad" (يَد) primarily refers to the human hand in its anatomical sense. However, the semantic scope of this word extends well beyond physical boundaries. In the classical Arabic lexical tradition and throughout the Quran, "yad" is also used in the following contexts: power and authority, dominion and control, leadership and governing authority, and the order one has established and the system one has built.

This multi-layered semantic structure appears most strikingly in the expression "Yadullah" (يَدُ الله — the Hand of God). In this construction, no one depicts God with a physical hand; rather, the expression symbolizes God's absolute power, His all-encompassing will, and His boundless sovereignty over the universe. Evaluated by

the same logic, the expression "yada Abu Lahab" in Surah Al-Masad also carries an abstract meaning: the system Abu Lahab constructed, the network of dominance he built, and the mechanisms of power through which he directed society.

With this interpretation, the meaning of the verse deepens profoundly: "Perish be Abu Lahab's order, perish." This is not merely the cursing of one individual — it is the divine invalidation of the unjust power structure he represents.

Abu Lahab: From Person to Symbol

According to narrations, Abu Lahab was the Prophet Muhammad's own uncle. This familial bond makes his enmity toward Islam all the more significant, for Abu Lahab acted not out of mere personal hatred but from a sense of existential threat. In the early years of Islam, Abu Lahab held decisive influence over the political and economic balances of Mecca, and he read the message of the new religion not merely as a theological challenge but as a structural one.

What did this message threaten? First and foremost, the economic system built upon polytheism. The trade networks surrounding the Kaaba, the organization of pilgrimage, and the commerce of idols formed the material foundation of the Qurayshi aristocracy. Beyond that, this message also threatened the tribal hierarchy and the social order based on lineage superiority — proclaiming that slaves, the poor, and women possessed equal dignity before God. Abu Lahab viewed this discourse of equality as the greatest threat to his own order.

Therefore, Abu Lahab's hostility toward Islam was not a personal grudge but a structural defense of power. He recognized that the "yada" he held in his hands — the power, the order, the system — was being dismantled, and he mobilized all his resources against it.

The Order of Abu Lahab: Its Anatomy and Functioning

It is possible to read the order Abu Lahab represented through several fundamental dynamics.

Power-Based Legitimacy: In pre-Islamic Arabia, authority derived not from a moral foundation but from a tribe's strength, the magnitude of one's wealth, and social status. Abu Lahab was both a beneficiary and a guardian of this structure. The fundamental reason he found Islam's emphasis on justice and equality dangerous was precisely this: a new source of legitimacy was emerging, one that radically questioned his power.

Social Pressure and Enforcement Mechanisms: Abu Lahab did not limit his hostility to words alone. He played an active role in the boycotts imposed on the believers, traveled to tribes outside Mecca to obstruct the Prophet Muhammad's invitation, and ran an active propaganda campaign to keep people away from Islam. This was not individual animosity but an organized policy of suppression.

Intra-familial Collaboration and the Reproduction of Order: Surah Al-Masad also condemns Abu Lahab's wife. This detail is not incidental. The Quran here

demonstrates how an order instrumentalizes even the institution of family to reproduce itself. The narration that Abu Lahab's wife scattered thorns on the paths the Prophet Muhammad walked reveals just how concrete and persistent this collaboration was.

The Structure of the Surah: Curse or Proclamation?

Although Surah Al-Masad is generally described as a "surah of cursing," this characterization contains a degree of conceptual reductionism. The surah's discourse is not merely a malediction but a proclamation of divine judgment. The use of the verb "tabbat" in Arabic carries not so much the quality of a wish directed toward the future as a statement of fact: this order has already collapsed; its fall is inevitable.

Viewed from this perspective, the surah is not a prophecy or a curse but the proclamation of the law of inherent collapse that governs all unjust orders. History has validated this judgment: Abu Lahab died just a few days after receiving news of the Battle of Badr, without witnessing the triumph of Islam. The order he built was destroyed before he was.

The Contrast Between "Yada" and "Yadullah"

To situate Surah Al-Masad within its universe of meaning, one must look at the uses of "yad" in the Quran's broader discourse. Through the concept of "Yadullah," the Quran proclaims that God's will and power stand above all human power structures. This divine "hand" represents a dynamic that establishes justice, eliminates oppression, and determines the course of history.

Abu Lahab's "yada," by contrast, symbolizes the exact opposite: it is the product of human arrogance, unjust power, and an inequitable order. This contrast between the two "hands" lends the surah a profound theological dimension. The withering of Abu Lahab's hand is his order's submission to God's will — nothing other than the expression, within the Quran, of the ancient conflict between the powerful and the Absolutely Powerful.

Surah Al-Masad as a Universal Warning

Surah Al-Masad does not speak solely to seventh-century Mecca. The message it contains holds a universal warning that transcends a specific geography and era. The essence of this warning is: every order founded on power yet devoid of justice carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

The contemporary reflections of this universal reading are abundantly clear. Orders in which those who hold power systematically oppress the poor and the weak; structures of authority that derive their legitimacy not from the consent of the people but from coercion and sanctions; systems that concentrate economic resources in a narrow minority and disregard social justice — all of these are modern manifestations of Abu Lahab's order. Islam's position toward such orders is laid out with great clarity in Surah Al-Masad: no power built on oppression endures forever; God's justice manifests sooner or later.

"Tabbat yada Abi Lahab wa tabb" — "Perish be Abu Lahab's order, perish."

This expression is one of the most concentrated declarations in the Quran concerning the relationship between power and justice. The semantic depth of the word "yada" transforms the surah from an individual curse into a universal principle: power gains legitimacy only through justice; every structure of authority devoid of justice prepares its own end.

Abu Lahab is the historical figure in whom this principle took concrete form. His enmity reveals the helplessness of the logic of power — rooted in fear and self-interest — in the face of the divine message brought by the Prophet Muhammad. Surah Al-Masad proclaims this helplessness and heralds a divine justice that will remain valid until the end of history.

The Abu Lahab of the past has been erased from the stage of history; yet the order he represented continues to take the stage anew in every age. And the Quran's warning remains, in every age, a living address — ever present, ever relevant.

Change and Transformation: The Role of Openness to Criticism in Human Development

From the moment a person comes into the world, they are in a state of constant change and transformation. Physical growth, mental maturation, spiritual deepening — all of these are inseparable parts of human existence. Yet this change does not happen spontaneously or automatically. A genuine transformation is only possible when a person is open to it, desires it, and makes an effort toward it.

The question "Why is it wrong to be at 70 what you were at 7?" presents itself as an extraordinarily profound and thought-provoking one. For a seventy-year-old to evaluate life the same way a seven-year-old does — with the same curiosities, the same superficial judgments, the same limited worldview — would be a great tragedy. If nothing has been gained from the experiences, hardships, knowledge, and criticism accumulated over the years, then that person has not truly lived; they have merely aged. True maturity is not a product of chronological age, but of the wisdom earned and the transformation undergone.

The Danger of Seeing Oneself as Sufficient

One of the greatest obstacles to human development is seeing oneself as adequate and complete. In Islamic literature, this state is expressed through the concept of istighnā. As a person acquires education, gains experience, advances in age, and attains social status, they sometimes fall into a dangerous delusion: believing they know everything. The most perilous dimension of this delusion is that it closes a person off to criticism — because someone who considers themselves sufficient believes that nothing another person says could add any value. Over time, this belief leaves the person in a state of ignorance from which it is difficult to escape, and yet they do not even realize it. The most dangerous ignorance, after all, is the ignorance one is unaware of.

This attitude is more commonly observed in those who have reached a certain level

of achievement. Academic titles, professional successes, religious knowledge, or social prestige — all of these can, without one's awareness, push a person into a pit of arrogance. Yet every level points to the existence of a higher one. Every piece of knowledge is a herald of a deeper ignorance. The person who cannot internalize this truth becomes frozen in place.

The Destructive Effect of Arrogance

Arrogance is one of the most powerful forces that drives a person backward, both materially and spiritually. An arrogant person does not see others as equals, and therefore disregards what they say. They perceive criticism as an attack, view advice and warnings as insults, and belittle differing opinions. The Quran makes it explicitly clear that the arrogant cannot benefit from admonition — a divine warning of great significance. For receiving admonition is a deeper process than acquiring information. Knowledge enters the mind, but admonition touches the heart. If arrogance resides in the heart, no admonition can enter; the heart remains in a kind of spiritual blindness.

At the root of arrogance lies a weakness in the fear of God. A person who truly fears God knows that they will be called to account at any moment. This awareness makes them humble. They do not see themselves as great, for they know who the truly Great One is. Deep reverence and love for God naturally orients a person toward humility. One who nurtures their arrogance, however, drifts away from God without realizing it — and that drift leads them toward a spiritual collapse.

Criticism: Not a Threat, but a Gift

Today, the concept of criticism is most often viewed through a negative lens. Receiving criticism is seen as a sign of weakness, and the person offering it is frequently treated as an enemy. Yet this perspective is a deep-seated error. Properly understood, criticism is like a light that illuminates the places a person cannot see on their own. No one can see themselves fully and completely. Just as a person cannot see their own back without a mirror, certain flaws in their character can only be noticed by another's eyes. Criticism is therefore, in truth, a great blessing and an opportunity.

Being able to sincerely accept criticism is a mark of genuine maturity. Such acceptance does not diminish a person's self-worth — it strengthens it. For the person who acknowledges their mistake and sets out to correct it demonstrates both their honesty and their openness to growth. This makes them more trustworthy, more respected, and a person of greater character.

Some people, on the other hand, approach criticism defensively. They question the motives of the one offering it, shift the conversation to a different dimension to provoke an argument, or launch into lengthy justifications to prove themselves right. This kind of attitude not only deprives the person of the benefit of criticism; it also damages relationships and leads to social isolation. Over time, people become reluctant to tell this person the truth, knowing that every piece of criticism will escalate into a conflict — and this leaves the person alone with their own errors.

The Conditions for Inner Transformation

Genuine change cannot be merely the product of external pressure. A change shaped by someone else's coercion or by the force of circumstances remains temporary and superficial. Deep and lasting transformation requires three fundamental conditions:

The first is a sincere acknowledgment of one's shortcomings. A person must first accept that a mistake or deficiency exists. This step is far more difficult than it appears, for the ego always resists this surrender. But without overcoming this resistance, no real change can begin.

The second is the internalization of the will to change. Acknowledgment alone is not enough. A person must not only see the mistake but carry a determined desire to correct it. Without this will, knowledge remains as knowledge; it does not become action.

The third, and most important, is that this process must be nourished by a turning toward God. When a person tries to change by relying solely on their own strength and willpower, they most often fail — for the lower self (nafs) constantly tries to pull a person back into familiar patterns. But a deep love for God and a sincere orientation toward Him breaks this resistance. The goal of earning God's pleasure offers a person their most powerful motivation on the journey of change.

The Quran's View of Change

The Quran places great importance on the process of human change. God has declared that the condition of a people or an individual changes only when that person changes what is within themselves. This divine law reveals a truth of immense importance: change is not awaited from outside — it begins from within. If a person genuinely wishes to change and reinforces that desire with a sincere turning toward God, God will never leave that effort unrewarded. This divine promise is the greatest assurance on the journey of transformation. Even if a person takes small steps, even if they stumble at times, they should know that on this sincere journey they are not alone.

The Muslim's Responsibility: Individual and Collective Transformation

Islam elevates not only personal development but also social transformation. The principle of amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa nahy 'an al-munkar — enjoining good and forbidding evil — is an obligation for every believer. This responsibility requires the believer to maintain honest relationships not only with themselves but with those around them. This principle also elevates criticism to the level of an act of worship. When a believer offers constructive criticism to another, it is an expression of the love and sense of brotherhood they feel for that person. To remain silent, in many cases, is not indifference — it is a betrayal. Seen from this perspective, criticism is a responsibility that contributes to the growth of both the one who gives it and the one who receives it.

The Journey Never Ends

A person's journey of growth never comes to an end in this world. Every day brings a new opportunity, every mistake a new lesson, every criticism a new chance. No matter how far a person progresses on this journey, they must never forget that the possibility of becoming better always remains. The person who considers themselves sufficient stops — and in stopping, they actually move backward. For life flows, values deepen, and understanding grows — yet a consciousness that remains fixed within all of this is gradually left behind.

To be open to criticism is not a weakness; it is the most powerful sign of maturity. To let go of arrogance is to attain freedom. The person who sets out on a journey of inner transformation by turning toward God will find both peace in this world and God's boundless blessings in the next. For true success lies not in how great one appears, but in how much one has grown.

Understanding the Quran: A Journey Beyond Tajweed

The Quran, as the cornerstone of Islamic civilization, has been read, memorized, and recited aloud by millions of people for centuries. Yet the question of what this profound relationship truly means has been asked and debated anew in every era. The distance between pronouncing a text's sounds correctly and grasping its spirit perhaps represents one of the most significant tensions in the history of Islamic thought.

Tajweed — the discipline of pronouncing Quranic letters from their proper articulation points — has been placed at the center of religious education. From the Directorate of Religious Affairs to Sulaymani communities, from memorization courses to Quran schools, tajweed occupies a position of primary instruction across numerous institutions. There are historical and pedagogical justifications for this focus. Yet over time, the question of whether these justifications constitute an end or a means has grown increasingly urgent.

Tajweed did not exist as a codified set of rules during the period of revelation. The Prophet Muhammad's recitation was transmitted by the Companions through direct listening; written rules only began to emerge as Islam spread to different geographies and new Muslims could not speak Arabic as a native language. Tajweed is, in essence, a philological preservation project — the product of an effort to faithfully safeguard the sound of revelation. This effort is entirely legitimate and valuable in its own right. The fact that the Arabic of the Quran has been transmitted without corruption across centuries is a testament to this meticulousness.

However, an important distinction must be observed here: preserving the linguistic integrity of a historical text and understanding and living that text are two separate acts — ones that necessarily complement each other but cannot substitute for one another. Consider a book carefully preserved in a library, kept from humidity and light. This preservation may be an expression of reverence for the book's content. Yet is it truly possessing that book to never open it, never read its lines, never apply the knowledge it contains? While the importance given to tajweed is valuable, neglecting meaning is precisely this paradox.

Surah Al-Muzzammil, Verse 4

The verse most frequently cited as the Quranic basis for tajweed is the fourth verse of Surah Al-Muzzammil: "aw zid alayhi wa rattil il-Qur'ana tartīlā." Classical translation has rendered this as "recite the Quran slowly and distinctly," and this rendering has become one of the foundational pillars of the tajweed tradition.

However, examining the etymology of the word tartīl reveals a broader and richer semantic field. Derived from the root ratl, the word carries meanings in classical Arabic such as "the straight and orderly arrangement of teeth," "measured and proportionate speech," and "presenting something in an ordered manner." The core of the word thus rests not on phonetic perfection, but on the ideas of order, measure, and systematic presentation.

In this context, reducing the command of tartīl in the verse solely to rules of pronunciation narrows the word's semantic breadth. The verse equally evokes the idea of presenting the Quran in an intelligible, orderly, and systematic manner. Therefore, attempting to prove the necessity of tajweed from this verse alone brings with it a reductionist interpretation that overlooks the word's linguistic structure.

"Will They Not Reflect?": The Quran's Own Call

The Quran issues its most powerful call regarding how it should be read in a different verse. Surah Muhammad, verse 24, poses the question: "Will they not, then, ponder over the Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" This rhetorical question carries an extremely significant emphasis. Allah is not asking here whether letters are being pronounced correctly. The question is about understanding, about tadabbur — deep contemplation.

The fact that the Quran itself makes such a strong emphasis on meaning regarding its own recitation opens the legitimacy of a tajweed-centered Quranic pedagogy to debate. Similarly, Surah Abasa, verses 11–12, states: "No indeed — it is a reminder. So let whoever wills, remember it." The Quran here defines itself as a reminder. For a reminder to function, it must be understood. A reminder that is not understood cannot fulfill its function, no matter how faithfully its sound is preserved.

Reading Without Understanding: Ritual or Guidance?

In Islamic epistemology, it is accepted that acts of worship have two fundamental dimensions: the zahir (the outward, observable dimension) and the batin (the inner meaning, intention, and effect). Performing prayer is an outward act, yet for prayer to restrain one from evil, it must be internalized. Fasting is a bodily practice, yet its true purpose is to reach taqwa — God-consciousness. Quranic recitation is equally not free from the tension between these two dimensions.

A Quran read without understanding may provide a certain ritual satisfaction at the individual level and may function as a marker of cultural identity at the social level. These functions carry their own value. Yet the Quran's primary purpose — guidance, leading people to the right path — can only be realized through understanding.

This may be illustrated as follows: a doctor writing prescriptions for patients draws on medical knowledge. Someone who reads that prescription without understanding its medical content may recite the paper in a beautiful voice, but cannot heal the patient. The Quran too is a kind of spiritual and moral prescription offered to humanity. Pronouncing its sounds beautifully is like taking care of the prescription's paper; what truly matters is understanding and applying its contents.

Allah's Principle of Justice and Biological Constraints

The thesis that tajweed is an absolute obligation confronts a weighty objection: what of those who stutter, those with tachylalia (rapid speech disorder), those with dyslexia, or those who, for biological reasons, cannot produce certain Arabic sounds? If Allah's pleasure is contingent upon the flawless production of specific sound vibrations, it follows that these individuals fall outside the scope of perfect worship. Yet the Islamic principles of adl (justice) and yusr (ease) directly refute such an interpretation. The Quran states clearly: "Allah intends ease for you and does not intend hardship for you" (Al-Baqarah 185).

Allah evaluates effort and intention, not outcome. The focus is not on the capacity to produce "perfect sound," but on "sincere intention" and genuine striving. From this perspective, it becomes clear that no human body, no linguistic structure, and no speech capacity that Allah has created can be left outside divine address. Tying the fulfillment of a religious obligation to a biological ability amounts to placing limits on Allah's will to create and to speak — a theologically inconsistent position.

The Claim of Universality and Language

The Quran defines itself as a universal message sent not for a particular community alone, but for all of humanity. If this claim to universality is to be taken seriously, the idea that the message can only be fully received by those possessing the phonetic structure of a single language fundamentally undermines that claim.

It is known that Allah sent revelation to different communities and eras through their messengers in those communities' own languages. Surah Ibrahim, verse 4, states: "We did not send any messenger except in the language of his people so that he could make things clear to them." This principle underscores that the purpose of communication is to be understood. Communication established without achieving understanding is, in substance, deficient — even if it exists in form.

When we compare an individual who understands the Quran in Turkish, reflects on its rulings, and applies them to their life, with an individual who reads the Arabic letters with phonetic perfection yet does not grasp the content, the question of who has established a genuine relationship with Allah's message inevitably arises. Concepts such as honesty, justice, compassion, and solidarity are universal, regardless of the language in which they are expressed. Someone who lives these concepts in their heart and conduct stands far closer to the spirit of the Quran than a phonetically focused reader.

From Calligraphy to Message: Reassessing Priorities

In the medieval Islamic world, extraordinary care was given to the khatt — the calligraphic art of the Quran. Scripts such as Kufic, Naskh, and Thuluth transformed Quranic pages into visual masterpieces. This aesthetic sensibility is valuable. Yet no master calligrapher ever placed the beauty of writing above the meaning of the text; beautiful script was an elegant means of conveying meaning, not the end in itself.

The excessive priority given to tajweed carries a similar risk of deviation. To admire the beauty of calligraphy and set the book aside without reading the message within, and to pronounce letters flawlessly while neglecting their meaning, is fundamentally the same error. In both cases, the means is lost in the shadow of the end.

At this point, the essential question religious education must ask itself is: for what are we raising our students? For phonetic performance, or for individuals who understand, reflect, and shape their lives through the values of the Quran?

A Practical Proposal: An Integrated Quranic Pedagogy

The arguments presented above do not mean that tajweed should be abandoned entirely. Tajweed is valuable for preserving the sonic texture of the Quran and for enriching recitation for those who can read Arabic. What is being proposed is a repositioning of tajweed within the hierarchy of pedagogical priorities. In this regard, the following principles may be considered:

- Quranic education should center understanding and tadabbur. Applying the Quran's message to life and internalizing its moral principles should be treated as a priority that precedes purely phonetic work.

- Alternative approaches should be developed for individuals with biological or linguistic limitations, keeping open different paths through which they can contribute and build a relationship with the Quran.

- Tajweed education should continue, but be presented in an integrated manner alongside comprehension and living out the message in one's mother tongue rather than in Arabic.

- Finally, translations of the Quran in different languages should be accepted not merely as supplementary resources, but as a valid means of entering into direct relationship with the Quran.

Religion Is Character Formation

The Quran, within its own pages, repeatedly demands to be understood and contemplated — and expects practical moral consequences to follow. Values such as honesty, justice, generosity, and compassion are not concepts to be known theoretically, but to be lived. A person who embodies all of these values in daily life — whether they learned and understood them in Turkish, Persian, English, or any other language — is a traveler familiar with the spirit of the Quran.

On the other hand, an individual who, even if haltingly, with difficulty, in a foreign tongue, remembers Allah from the depths of their heart and takes His commands as

a guide for their life, is engaged not in a religious "oratory contest" but in a genuine "character formation."

Allah is the Creator of all languages. He hears both the vibrations of sounds and the intentions of hearts. What is asked of us is not a flawless phonetic performance, but a consciousness that understands, reflects, takes the reminder to heart, and transforms that reminder into lived experience. In the words of Surah Abasa: "So let whoever wills, remember it." To receive the reminder is to hear it, understand it, and bring it to life.

Religion, Identity, and the Crisis of Civilization

Human history has been shaped by the rise and fall of beliefs; societies have sometimes unified around religious values and at other times drifted away from them, plunging into deep crises. Today, both Western and Eastern societies find themselves in a similar existential crisis — the cumulative product of historical processes. This crisis is not merely a matter of individual faith; it is the reflection of a structural collapse that profoundly affects humanity's most fundamental concerns: identity, meaning, justice, and freedom.

One of the most striking paradoxes of the modern age is this: humanity possesses more knowledge, technology, and material prosperity than ever before in history, yet has never been so helpless in its search for meaning. The accelerating pace of secularization, the questioning of traditional belief systems, and the erosion of cultural identities have pushed individuals and societies into a spiritual void that proves extraordinarily difficult to fill. This void is no accident. Understanding this transformation — which has deep historical, philosophical, and sociological roots — is essential both for grasping the depth of the crisis and for generating paths out of it.

The West's Secular Adventure: Freedom, or a New Form of Slavery?

Western civilization was shaped throughout the Middle Ages under the absolute authority of the Catholic Church. The Church was not merely a spiritual guide; it was a center of political, economic, and intellectual power. The dogmatic walls of scholastic thought suppressed scientific curiosity and equated questioning with heresy. The Renaissance, the Reformation, and the subsequent Enlightenment movement arose in opposition to this climate of repression, launching a profound transformation of mentality by placing human reason and individual freedom at the center.

At its outset, this transformation carried the genuine promise of liberation for humanity. The triad of science, reason, and freedom was presented as a torch blazing against the darkness of the Middle Ages. Yet the long-term consequences of this process have not been as bright as anticipated. As religion gradually withdrew from social life, humanity's search for meaning did not disappear — it merely changed form. New ideologies, new idols, and new faiths emerged to fill the vacated spiritual space. Nationalism, liberalism, Marxism, consumerism, and technology fetishism appeared on the historical stage as substitutes that attempted to assume religion's function, yet fell short of reaching the deeper layers of the human soul.

One of the most striking manifestations of this process today is the elevation of scientific thinking into something resembling a new religion. Science, by its very nature, is a method open to doubt, questioning, and revision. Yet an intellectual elite that monopolizes this method and seeks to shape society within its own ideological frameworks has transformed into a secular version of the medieval clergy. Dogma, having shed its religious form and continued its existence under a scientific guise, is at its core the same mechanism of domination in a different guise.

The emptying of European churches is one of the most visible symbols of this profound rupture. Christianity has been one of the moral and cultural pillars of Western civilization; yet for many Europeans today, religion has become a historical artifact rather than a living system of belief. The price of this rupture is paid by individuals in the form of meaninglessness, loneliness, and identity crisis.

The Crisis in the Islamic World: The Transformation from Revelation to Tradition

The crisis currently experienced by the Islamic world may appear different from the West's secular crisis, yet in terms of its roots it contains a similar story of deviation. The difference is this: while the West fell into a spiritual void by abandoning religion, Islamic societies — while appearing to practice religion — have been drawn into a similar void by drifting from its essence.

The mission of our Prophet Muhammad aimed not only at individual salvation but at societal transformation. The pagan order of Mecca was not merely a matter of worshipping stone idols; it was also a power structure that legitimized economic exploitation, slavery, the commodification of women, and tribal discrimination. Islam's original message was a comprehensive revolt against this integrated system of injustice. The principle of tawhid was not merely a theological proposition; it was a revolutionary principle that guaranteed human dignity and freedom.

Yet over the course of history, a deep chasm has formed between the essence of this message and the practice of societies. The political conflicts that rapidly developed following the death of the Prophet paved the way for religious interpretation to be exploited for the calculations of power. In subsequent centuries, the pure revelatory foundation of Islam was abandoned; narratives drawn from Jewish and Christian cultural traditions (known as Isra'iliyyat), local customs, superstitions, and folkloric tales came to pervade the greater part of religious understanding.

The contemporary reflection of this historical deviation is plainly visible in the discourse produced by traditionalist religious circles. Islam is increasingly defined through rituals, prohibitions, and symbolic markers of identity. Religious guidance, rather than responding to people's existential questions, social injustices, and moral crises, has been reduced to the preoccupation of determining which celebrations are permissible, which beard style counts as sunnah, or which clothing is appropriate.

The most striking example of this approach is concretized in the calls to ban New Year's celebrations. While the youth of society struggles with meaninglessness, unemployment, and identity crisis, the fact that religious authority expends its energy on symbolic prohibitions reveals just how profoundly the problem has been

misdiagnosed. Transforming a society is possible not by banning the days it celebrates, but by fundamentally rebuilding its intellectual world, its understanding of justice, and its value system. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad spent more than ten years building the hearts and minds of people before smashing the idols with a hammer.

The Anatomy of a Shared Collapse

These two crises, which appear very different on the surface, are in reality different manifestations of a common dynamic. In both societies, the real problem is either the misunderstanding of religion or the void of meaning created by estrangement from it. Western societies, in rejecting institutional religion, did not reject humanity's search for meaning; they simply gave that search a different name. Consumerism, celebrity culture, digital addiction, and identity politics are distorted expressions of this same search. Islamic societies, while preserving religious symbols, have drifted from their spirit; performing rituals of worship while finding no obstacle in religion to legitimizing injustice, inequality, and authoritarianism.

In both cases, the outcome is the same: rather than feeling connected to a meaning that transcends the self, human beings find themselves caught in the gears of new systems of power dressed in ideological or religious clothing.

A Return to the Essence of Revelation

The proposed solution to this picture must amount to more than a sloganeering call to "return to the essence." Genuine reform must take shape along several fundamental axes.

First and foremost, it is necessary to set aside commentaries, hadith collections, and legal schools, and to read revelation directly, with a critical eye. This means a reading purged of superstitions and cultural myths — one that speaks to reason, conscience, and universal human dignity. Tawhid, the theological core of Islam, is a declaration of freedom against all forms of authority. Its genuine internalization offers a powerful foundation for both individual and societal transformation.

Second, the social justice dimension of Islam must be placed at the center. The struggle waged by the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca aimed not at mere change of belief but at the fundamental transformation of the economic order, social relations, and political structure. Any religious discourse conducted today in the name of Islam — without placing poverty, income inequality, political oppression, and the violation of human rights on its agenda — is a betrayal of the spirit of that history.

Third, in order to respond to the West's secular crisis, Islam must be presented not merely as an identity brand or cultural tradition, but as a living intellectual system with universal values, capable of addressing the modern individual's crisis of meaning. This is possible not through a defensive reactionism, but through a self-confident, critical, and honest intellectual effort.

A Responsibility Beyond the Search for Meaning

The spiritual crisis humanity faces today is not the concern of a single society or a single religion. It is the product of the structural contradictions of the modern world. The materialist legacy of the West and the ritualistic superficiality of the Islamic world have, by different paths, arrived at the same impasse: the failure to fulfill humanity's need for freedom, dignity, and meaning.

A genuine way out lies neither in a nostalgic return to the frozen forms of the past, nor in the endless progressivist promise of modernity. It passes through reconnecting with the liberating essence of revelation, with the universal principles of justice, and with the incontestable value of human dignity.

Religion cannot be reduced to a mechanism of control that shapes human beings through prohibitions and rituals. On the contrary, it must be understood as a transformative force that reorganizes, along the axes of justice, compassion, and responsibility, the relationship a person holds both with themselves and with the society in which they live. Bringing this understanding to life will both enrich the individual's spiritual world and contribute to societies finding common ground in a shared humanity. For it has been proven throughout history that a faith nourished by freedom, justice, and human dignity can never belong to a single community alone — it can become the common heritage of all humanity.

Conscience, Revelation, and Humanity: Moral Guidance from the Qur'anic Perspective

Among all living beings on earth, the human being possesses the most complex moral structure. This complexity stems from the human capacity for both good and evil. So how does a person find the right path amid this deep tension between two poles? According to Islam, the answer lies in two fundamental concepts: conscience and revelation. Though they may appear independent of one another, they are in fact united in profound harmony. God has endowed humanity with both an inner guide — conscience — and an outer guide — revelation.

The Arabic word wijdān (conscience) derives from the root meaning "to find" and "to feel." In Turkish, it has acquired a distinctive meaning over the centuries, coming to express the human capacity to distinguish good from evil within one's inner world. From a philosophical standpoint, conscience is defined as an internal judgment mechanism placed at the center of moral reasoning, making a person accountable for their actions.

In Islam, conscience is regarded as a divine gift. When God created the human being, He gave not only a bodily form but also a moral compass. This compass activates with every decision, conveying the message: "Stop, reflect, choose rightly." This inner voice is conscience itself. In everyday life, the feeling of tightness, discomfort, and remorse a person experiences before or after committing an injustice is the most tangible proof of conscience's existence. What matters is this: conscience is not a feeling produced by the person themselves. It is an innate endowment given by God as a trust. Just as the eye was created to see light and the ear to hear sound, conscience was given to humanity to perceive good and evil.

Two Paths in the Qur'an: Fujūr and Taqwā

As the divine text that addresses human nature most openly and profoundly, the Qur'an speaks to conscience directly. In Sūrat al-Shams, this subject is expressed in a remarkably striking way:

"And He inspired it with its wickedness and its righteousness." (Al-Shams, 91:7–8)

These two verses summarize the essence of human psychology in just a few words. Fujūr refers to sin, rebellion, moral collapse, and transgression of divine boundaries; taqwā carries the meaning of fear of God, a sense of responsibility, and avoidance of evil. God has placed both of these tendencies within the human being — not to condemn them necessarily to evil or good, but rather to make them possessors of free will and to remind them that they are being tested through that freedom.

The word ilhām (inspiration) in this verse also deserves attention. Inspiration is not an external compulsion but an innately present inclination that arises from within. God introduced the human being to the inclinations toward both good and evil through inspiration, then left the freedom and responsibility of choosing between these two paths to the person themselves. The verses continue: "Indeed, he who purifies it has succeeded, and indeed, he who buries it has failed." (Al-Shams, 91:9–10). These words clearly declare that one who listens to their conscience and purifies their soul will attain salvation, while one who suppresses their conscience and follows their lower desires will be lost.

The Scope of Revelation: Is It Exclusive to Prophets?

When revelation is mentioned, the first thing that traditionally comes to mind is the divine messages sent by God to His prophets. This is correct; however, the Qur'an uses the concept of revelation in a far broader sense. When the Qur'anic narratives of revelation are examined, this concept appears along three distinct dimensions.

The first dimension is revelation that comes to prophets. This is the best-known and most comprehensive type. God sent divine messages to chosen prophets through the Holy Spirit, and these messages were transformed into scriptures to guide humanity.

The second dimension is revelation that comes to other living creatures. The Qur'an explicitly states that God reveals not only to human beings but to other beings as well. In Sūrat al-Nahl it is stated:

"And your Lord revealed to the bee: 'Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and in that which they construct.'" (Al-Nahl, 16:68)

This verse demonstrates how encompassing the concept of revelation truly is. Through this "instinctual revelation" received from God, the bee knows how to build a honeycomb, produce honey, and exist in balance within nature. This is certainly a different type than prophetic revelation, yet it is deeply meaningful as a form of divine guidance. Every being, within the framework of its own capacity and station, receives God's direction and fulfills its existential purpose through that guidance.

The third dimension is inspiration and revelation that comes to ordinary human beings. This is the most debated and most thought-provoking dimension. In the Qur'an, there are important examples of individuals who received a special divine message despite not being prophets.

Examples of Revelation Coming to Non-Prophets

The Mother of Moses

The Qur'an relates that God sent revelation to the mother of Moses:

"And We revealed to the mother of Moses: 'Nurse him; then when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him one of the messengers.'" (Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:7)

This verse is remarkably striking. The mother of Moses is trying to protect her son from the oppression of Pharaoh. At this critical moment, God gives her both a directive and a reassurance. The revelation here is not prophetic revelation but rather inspiration in the nature of an inner voice. God's direct intervention in response to a mother's anguish over her child demonstrates how vast a space divine mercy encompasses.

The Disciples of Jesus

Another striking example concerns the disciples of Jesus. In Sūrat al-Mā'ida it is stated:

"And when I inspired the disciples to believe in Me and My messenger, they said, 'We have believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims.'" (Al-Mā'ida, 5:111)

In this verse, God declares that He directly inspired the disciples of Jesus. Despite not holding the status of prophets, the disciples were recipients of divine guidance. This reveals that God establishes a special communication not only with prophets but also with His righteous servants, through revelation and inspiration.

Mary

Perhaps the most striking example is the divine messages that came to Mary. In Sūrat Āl ʿImrān it is stated:

"And when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.'" (Āl ʿImrān, 3:42)

God conveyed an important message to Mary through the angels. However, the message that came to her carries the nature of a glad tiding rather than prophetic revelation. All of these examples clearly demonstrate that the concept of revelation has a layered structure. Not every type of revelation is the same, but each reflects a distinct form of special communication God establishes with the beings He has created.

The Deep Bond Between Conscience and Revelation

When all of these examples are considered together, it becomes clear that there is an intrinsic bond between conscience and revelation. Revelation is divine guidance that comes from without; conscience is divine guidance that comes from within. Yet both draw from the same source: God's guidance. The revelation that comes to prophets is a universal message that guides humanity collectively. The inspiration that comes to conscience, on the other hand, is a silent yet powerful voice speaking to each individual personally within their own heart.

The Qur'an's teaching is this: when a person heeds both of these guides, they find the right path. The prophets showed humanity the way through revelation; conscience is the compass each individual refers to within their own inner world as they walk that path.

Satan is the negative force that intrudes upon this equation. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes that Satan strives to distance the human being from their innate nature, to silence the conscience, and to draw them toward fujūr. Yet the human being is not alone in this struggle — both the inner voice of conscience and the outer guidance of prophethood support them. The essential matter lies in the free choice the person makes as to whether or not to listen to these two guides.

Heeding Revelation and Conscience

Humanity's greatest trial is not being caught between good and evil, but being able to make the right choice within that predicament. God has provided the human being with both inner and outer means to succeed in this trial. The inner means is conscience; the outer means is the revelation brought by the prophets.

From beginning to end, the Qur'an draws attention to the central importance of these two guides in human life. Across a wide spectrum stretching from Sūrat al-Shams to Sūrat al-Nahl, from Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ to Sūrat al-Mā'ida, God describes through various examples how He provides guidance to human beings and to other creatures. The shared message of these examples is this: every being receives a direction from God. For the human being, the purest and most accessible form of this guidance is conscience.

In conclusion, conscience is a divine voice that speaks perpetually within the human being, inviting them toward goodness, righteousness, and taqwā. As long as a person does not silence this voice, avoids the habits that bury it, and nourishes it with the teachings of the prophets, they are able to walk the path God has shown. To listen to one's conscience is, ultimately, to listen to God. To grasp this truth is to hold in one's hands the key to happiness in both this world and the next.

The Qur'an and Reason: The Spiritual and Scientific Dimensions of Harmful Habits

The Holy Qur'an, the foundational source of Islam, is a guide aimed at bringing humanity to happiness in both this world and the hereafter. At the center of this guidance lies the principle of protecting the intellect. In accordance with this principle, the Qur'an commands that people keep away from all substances and behaviors that cloud the mind and weaken the capacity for thought and decision-making. Today,

substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs are darkening the lives of millions. These substances cause tremendous damage not only medically, but also spiritually and socially. The Qur'an's warnings on this matter align with the findings of modern science, once again demonstrating that the Qur'an is a universal guide.

The Scope of the Concept of "Khamr"

The word "khamr" used in the Qur'an is traditionally translated as wine or alcohol. However, when one examines the Arabic root of the word, it is found to carry the meanings of "to cover, to veil, to conceal." From this linguistic framework, it should be accepted that the concept of "khamr" is not limited to alcohol alone, but encompasses every substance that veils the intellect. In verse 219 of Surah Al-Baqarah, it is stated:

> "They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In both there is great sin and some benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."

This verse carries a remarkably striking tone. Allah does not say that these harmful substances and habits are entirely without benefit. On the contrary, He acknowledges that they have benefits, but emphasizes that these benefits are far outweighed by their sins and harms. This principle of balance is a clear indication of how well the Qur'an understands human nature. Indeed, cigarettes, through nicotine, initially increase dopamine release in the brain and create a temporary sense of relaxation. Some research has shown that nicotine can have a limited positive effect on short-term attention continuity. It is also a fact that some narcotic-derived substances are used in medicine as painkillers. The Qur'an does not overlook these benefits; however, it declares that the long-term harms completely overshadow them.

Surah Al-Ma'idah, Verse 90: A Definitive Prohibition

While the verse in Surah Al-Baqarah evaluates harmful substances in partial terms, verse 90 of Surah Al-Ma'idah places the matter in a far sharper frame:

> "O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, stone altars, and divining arrows are an abomination, the work of Satan. Avoid them so that you may be successful."

The word "rijs" used in this verse denotes both material and spiritual impurity. The characterization as "the work of Satan" reveals that these substances and actions create not only physical but also spiritual pollution. What is particularly striking is that mind-veiling substances are placed in the same category as stone altars — symbols of idolatry — and divining arrows, a remnant of the Age of Ignorance. This clearly shows to what degree these substances open the door to severe moral corruption.

The Effects of Cigarettes, Alcohol, and Drugs on the Intellect: A Scientific Perspective

Modern neuroscience corroborates the Qur'an's warnings in a remarkable way.

Cigarettes: As nicotine rapidly reaches the brain, dopamine release increases. This process initially creates a temporary sense of relaxation and focus. Over time, however, the brain becomes unable to produce sufficient dopamine on its own, and

addiction emerges. In the long term, smokers experience attention deficits, memory problems, and weakened problem-solving ability. Thousands of chemicals in tobacco smoke disrupt the vascular system, damage cell structure, and lay the groundwork for cancer.

Alcohol: It slows brain function, weakening the speed of thought and the ability to make rational decisions. An individual under the influence of alcohol largely loses the capacity to evaluate their own thoughts and actions. Short-term memory is seriously impaired; long-term use lays the foundation for permanent emotional disorders such as depression and anxiety. Alcohol also disrupts interpersonal communication, leading to misunderstandings and the breakdown of social relationships.

Drugs: They disrupt the balance of dopamine, serotonin, and other neurotransmitters in the brain. Attention deficits, inability to think rationally, and mental confusion are the primary symptoms of drug use. Long-term use leads to memory loss and permanent difficulties in learning new information. All of these findings demonstrate how apt the Qur'an's characterization of such substances as "veiling the intellect" truly is.

The Dimension of Waste: Material and Spiritual Loss

The Qur'an addresses harmful habits not only from a health perspective, but also in terms of waste. In verse 27 of Surah Al-Isra, it is stated:

> "Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord."

Cigarette consumption is a concrete example of this waste. A smoker squanders their health, money, and time into thin air. But waste is not merely a material loss; failing to properly use the blessings given by Allah is a spiritual act of ingratitude and defiance. The body has been entrusted to the human being as a trust. To betray this trust aligns with the act of "altering what Allah has created," as depicted in verse 119 of Surah An-Nisa.

The Prohibition of Harming the Self

Verse 29 of Surah An-Nisa raises another fundamental dimension of the matter:

> "And do not kill yourselves. Indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you."

Cigarettes do not lead a person to death through rapid suicide, but through a slow and insidious process of poisoning. The medical world has proven that cigarettes lay the groundwork for dozens of fatal diseases, most notably cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and chronic lung diseases. The difference between "slow suicide" and "rapid suicide" is only one of time; both fall within the scope of harming the self.

The Heart-Darkening Effect of Sin and Spiritual Collapse

The Qur'an teaches that harmful habits darken not only the body but also the heart. Verse 74 of Surah Al-Baqarah expresses this truth through a powerful metaphor:

> "Then your hearts hardened after that, being like stones or even harder…"

Making the commission of sin a habit leads to the gradual hardening of the heart and the loss of spiritual sensitivity. In verse 29 of Surah Al-Anfal, those who fear Allah and hold fast to piety are given the glad tidings that they will be granted the ability to distinguish right from wrong (furqan). Conversely, someone wallowing in habitual sin gradually begins to lose the capacity to discern which behavior is right and which is wrong.

In this context, the observation of Said Nursi is deeply meaningful: "Within every sin there is a path leading to disbelief." The habituation of what appears to be a minor sin, such as smoking, can gradually desensitize a person toward greater prohibitions. The steps of Satan operate in exactly this sequence: beginning from a small concession, leading a person step by step into a deeper darkness. This is why the following warning from Surah An-Nur is so pertinent:

> "O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, he surely commands indecency and evil."

The Call to Piety and the Path to Salvation

The Qur'an's message on this subject is not limited to prohibition alone; it invites humanity to hope, repentance, and salvation. Verse 119 of Surah At-Tawbah charts the compass for this path:

> "O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful."

Piety (taqwa) means not merely avoiding prohibitions, but purifying the intellect, the heart, and the body from all forms of corruption. Abandoning harmful habits is, before being a matter of strength, a matter of intention and will. Allah is ever ready to accept the sincere repentance and return of His servant.

The Holy Qur'an aims to bring humanity to a holistic state of health, both materially and spiritually. The comprehensive interpretation of the concept of "khamr" reveals that every substance and habit that veils the intellect must be evaluated within the scope of this prohibition. Cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs veil the intellect by disrupting brain chemistry, betray the trust by destroying the body, and prepare the ground for spiritual collapse by darkening the heart. Modern science has repeatedly confirmed these findings. Yet the superiority of the Qur'an lies in the fact that it articulated these truths long before science, through divine wisdom grounded in the language of human nature. Protecting our mental health means protecting the greatest trust that Allah has bestowed upon us — and this is possible only by holding firmly to the guidance of the Qur'an and avoiding the footsteps of Satan.

The Marriage of Our Prophet Muhammad to Zaynab bint Jahsh: A Historical, Theological, and Social Assessment

One of the most debated issues in Islamic history, the marriage of Our Prophet Muhammad to Zaynab bint Jahsh, holds a significant place on both the agenda of its time and of today. While this marriage may appear at first glance to be an ordinary

union, it carries deep social, legal, and divine dimensions at its core. To read the event correctly, it is necessary to carefully examine first the structure of pre-Islamic Arab society, then how the Quran transformed that structure, and finally the role of Our Prophet Muhammad in this marriage.

The Legal and Social Legacy of the Jahiliyya Period: The Institution of the "Da'iyy"

In order to make sense of this matter, it is first essential to grasp the Arabic concept of "da'iyy" (دَعِيّ) and its legal function in the Jahiliyya period. The word derives from the root "d-ʿ-w" (د ع و), whose basic meaning is "to call, to invite, to name." The term "da'iyy," derived from this root, refers to a person attributed to someone without a biological connection — one who is called under a particular name. Its plural form, "ed'iyâ" (اَدْعِيَاء), is the form used in verse 37 of Surah Al-Ahzab and appears in the literature as "those who are called." In Jahiliyya society, the legal weight of this concept was enormous. To call someone "my son" and to count him as a member of the tribe automatically transferred to him all the rights that a biological child possessed — rights of inheritance, tribal solidarity, arrangements of mahram relations, and family law. This practice was one of the primary means by which persons of slave origin or without tribal affiliation could obtain social security. Zayd ibn Haritha should be evaluated within this context.

The Use of "Ediayi" in the Quran and Its Difference from Adoption

The term "ediayi" appearing in verse 37 of Surah Al-Ahzab has been translated by many translators and commentators as "adopted son," which has laid the groundwork for a conceptual confusion and consequently an erroneous perception. Yet the Quran uses an entirely different expression for "adoption." In verse 9 of Surah Al-Qasas, the words of Pharaoh's wife regarding Our Prophet Moses — "Or we may adopt him as a son" — are rendered with the phrase "nettehi̇zehu veleda." The word "veleda" carries a meaning of adoption that evokes the establishment of physiological and legal lineage. The "ediayi" in Surah Al-Ahzab is not this; it expresses a relationship of patronage, protection, and being called under a name. This distinction is critically important. Zayd was not the adopted son of Our Prophet Muhammad; he was a close and trusted companion who had earned his protection, confidence, and sincere friendship, and with whom he had spent his early years. Our Prophet Muhammad had married Zayd to Zaynab bint Jahsh — his own paternal aunt's daughter — with the aim of elevating Zayd to an honorable position in society. This marriage also sent a powerful message against social class distinctions by bringing together a noble Qurayshi woman and a man of slave origin under the same family roof.

Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 37: The Text and Its Layers

The verse in question may be translated as follows:

"And when you said to the one upon whom Allah had bestowed favor and upon whom you had bestowed favor: 'Keep your wife and fear Allah,' while you concealed within yourself that which Allah was to disclose. And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you fear Him. So when Zayd had no longer any need for her, We

married her to you, in order that there not be upon the believers any difficulty concerning the wives of their adopted ones when they no longer have need of them. And the command of Allah is carried out."

This verse has two fundamental layers.

First layer: The effort to save the marriage. When serious incompatibilities arose in the marriage of Zayd and Zaynab, Our Prophet Muhammad advised Zayd to keep his wife and not to separate. This is the expression of a conscious and sincere effort to sustain the marriage. The argument sometimes advanced by critics — that "Muhammad wanted this marriage to be brought to an end" — is in direct contradiction with this first part of the verse.

Second layer: The demolition of a social prejudice. After Zayd's divorce, Allah commanded Our Prophet Muhammad to marry Zaynab. The justification for this command is stated explicitly: "in order that there not be upon the believers any difficulty." That is, the primary aim is to establish a legal and moral precedent for Muslims who would face similar situations in the future. Through this marriage, it was effectively proclaimed that there is no obstacle in Islamic law to marrying the divorced wife of someone within one's circle of patronage or close companionship.

The Matter of "The Concealed Thing": Love or Social Concern?

A claim frequently voiced in Orientalist literature and certain circles is this: Our Prophet Muhammad concealed his love for Zaynab and waited for Zayd's marriage to end. This interpretation leans on the verse's expression "you were concealing within yourself that which you were concealing." Yet this interpretation contradicts both the context of the text and the totality of the narrations. Our Prophet Muhammad had known Zaynab long before he married her; indeed, he had arranged this very marriage because he thought she would be compatible with Zayd. "The concealed thing" is not a romantic feeling but rather a delay formed by a human hesitation in the face of social pressure. Our Prophet Muhammad displayed a human vulnerability at this point; the Quran made him aware of it and ultimately anchored the matter to a divine command. This is part of a consistent pattern in which the Quran at times corrects Our Prophet Muhammad, and it points to the authenticity of his prophethood. For a text that speaks by revealing the truth rather than by exalting him can only be revelation.

The Intent of Our Prophet Muhammad: Personal Choice or Divine Command?

A significant portion of critics present this marriage as a reflection of Our Prophet Muhammad's personal desires. However, this claim contradicts the Quranic text itself. Verse 52 of Surah Al-Ahzab brings the following ruling: "It is not lawful for you to marry women after this, nor to exchange them for other wives, even if their beauty pleases you, except what your right hand possesses. And Allah is ever Watchful over all things." This verse placed a clear and definitive limit on Our Prophet Muhammad's marriages. What meaning would such a restriction carry for someone acting on personal desires? How would someone wishing to manage his marriages by his own will explain such a divine limitation? Moreover, chronology is also critically important.

Verse 37 of Surah Al-Ahzab was revealed after the marriage had taken place. This revelation is not a discourse fabricated to legitimize the event, but rather a divine declaration explaining and providing the rationale for an event that had already occurred. The verse recounts why this marriage took place; it is therefore not a post-hoc rationalization but an explanation of a divine project.

The Social Status of Divorced Women: A Concealed Reform

There is yet another dimension of this marriage that is most often overlooked: the social position of divorced women. In the Arab society of the Jahiliyya and early Islamic periods, divorced women — especially those who had been married to men of lower social standing — faced the risk of social stigmatization. Zaynab was a noble woman of the Quraysh. Moreover, tensions arising from class differences had also played a part in her marriage with Zayd. When this marriage dissolved, Zaynab faced the danger of falling into the position of a "problematic" woman in the eyes of society's value judgments. Our Prophet Muhammad's personally marrying this woman also means elevating her social standing and effectively declaring that being divorced cannot be a reason to exclude a woman. The Quran's presentation of this marriage as "the command of Allah" clearly reveals that the matter is viewed not merely at the level of an individual relationship but from the perspective of social justice.

The Question of Morality: On What Constitutes Immorality

Some circles analyze this marriage in conjunction with the concept of "immorality." Before entering this discussion, it is necessary to clarify on what criteria a moral assessment can be based. Immorality is acting with intent to deceive, manipulate, exploit, or harm a person. None of these criteria can be applied to this marriage. For Our Prophet Muhammad made an open effort to prolong and save the marriage of Zayd and Zaynab. Zayd made the decision to divorce of his own free will. There is no historical evidence of any pressure, manipulation, or trace of a secret relationship. One must also take into account the social authority and age that Our Prophet Muhammad possessed at that time. Attempting to explain this marriage through personal desire contradicts both the realities of the period and the consistent moral life of Our Prophet Muhammad.

The marriage of Our Prophet Muhammad to Zaynab bint Jahsh is neither an ordinary love story nor a personal weakness. This event is part of a divine project that demolished one of the deep-rooted legal and social structures of pre-Islamic Arabia — namely, the institution of the "called ones" (ediayi); that made biological reality the foundation of family law; that redefined the social standing of divorced women; and that presented these rulings not as abstract principles but as concrete living examples. Verse 37 of Surah Al-Ahzab is both the document and the explanation of this process. It is impossible to reconcile this picture — in which Our Prophet Muhammad's human hesitation is honestly laid bare, followed by his complete and unconditional fulfillment of the divine command — with fabrication or with any narrative rooted in personal desire, especially over the marriage of someone who was not even his adopted son, but his friend. Understanding Islam requires looking at

the social ground it transformed. This marriage is one of the most courageous and most concrete steps of that transformation. To present it as a moral problem is to distort history, to disregard the meanings of words, and to evaluate the conscience of a civilization in a false light.

Freedom of Belief in Islam and the Question of Apostasy

Islam is a belief system built upon universal values — mercy, justice, and freedom — that has given meaning to the lives of billions throughout history. Yet these very principles at the heart of the religion have at times been overshadowed by human interpretations and disputed narrations. Perhaps the most striking example of this overshadowing is the question of apostasy (ridda). The issue has been debated for centuries both within the Islamic world and in the West, raising questions about Islam's compatibility with human rights and freedom of conscience. Here, we examine the question of religious freedom in light of the Quran, explore whether certain hadith narrations on apostasy contradict the essence of Islam, and discuss the effects of such narrations on individual psychology and social structure.

The Quran's Foundational Principle: No Compulsion in Religion

The most reliable source for understanding Islam's view on freedom of belief is, without question, the Quran itself. The Quran takes an unambiguous and clear stance on this matter. Verse 256 of Surah Al-Baqarah is perhaps the most concise expression of this position: "There is no compulsion in religion." Though composed of just a few words, this statement carries a profound principle regarding Islam's understanding of faith. It reveals that faith obtained through coercion is not true faith at all — rather, the submission Islam seeks is one that arises from the heart's free and willing orientation toward God. Verse 99 of Surah Yunus reinforces this principle even more powerfully:

> "And had your Lord willed, all those on earth would have believed together. Would you then compel people until they become believers?"

What is striking about this verse is that the address is directed at the Prophet Muhammad himself. If God — who possesses the power to make all people believe — chose not to exercise that power, then no human being can claim the authority to compel belief. The value of faith derives precisely from being the product of a free will.

Apostasy in the Quran: A Matter of Otherworldly Accountability

Some circles argue that apostasy necessarily entails a worldly punishment. The Quran, however, offers a different perspective. Verse 217 of Surah Al-Baqarah states:

> "And whoever among you reverts from his religion and dies as a disbeliever — those are the ones whose deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally."

This verse draws a critically important distinction: the apostate's reckoning is deferred to the Hereafter. The verse mentions no worldly punishment whatsoever.

What is identified as the consequence is the nullification of one's deeds and the outcome in the afterlife. The Quran's silence on this matter is not coincidental but a deliberate choice — for the Quran explicitly specifies the punishments it prescribes (for theft, fornication, and the like). In the case of apostasy, no such worldly sanction exists.

Shedding Blood Unjustly Is a Crime Against All of Humanity

The value Islam places on human life is expressed with striking force in verse 32 of Surah Al-Ma'idah:

> "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption in the land — it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one life, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely."

This verse defines the killing of a person not merely as a crime against that individual, but as a crime against all of humanity. Viewed through this lens, killing someone solely because they have changed their belief stands in direct contradiction to this universal human principle established by the Quran.

The Disputed Hadith: "Kill Whoever Changes His Religion"

The narration "Kill whoever changes his religion," found in the Jihad section of Sahih Bukhari, has been a subject of debate among Islamic jurists for centuries. It is evident that this narration directly contradicts the principle of freedom of belief established by the Quran. Bukhari never personally witnessed the Prophet Muhammad, did not receive revelation from God, and did not hold to the position that "the Quran alone suffices." The hadith compilation projects were undertaken approximately two hundred years after the Prophet's death — a period marked by political rivalries, sectarian tensions, and interference in the religion by those who sought to undermine Islamic society from within. It must be acknowledged that any narration violating the foundational principles of the Quran — regardless of its attributed source — is contrary to the very essence of the religion. For the truth that the Quran is the sole and complete source constitutes the fundamental epistemological foundation of Islam.

The Psychological Dimension of Coercion: Reactance Theory

That prescribing the death penalty for apostasy is not only a religious error but also a deeply dysfunctional practice from a psychological standpoint is supported by scientific evidence. According to what psychology knows as reactance theory, when a person's freedom is threatened or restricted, the individual moves to defend that lost freedom more forcefully, and their inclination toward the prohibited behavior increases. A threat such as "If you leave Islam, you will be killed" does not strengthen a person's sincere attachment to the faith — on the contrary, it drives a deep wedge between their heart and their outward conduct. What emerges under such pressure is not faith arising from within, but external compliance born of fear. This stands in complete contradiction to the understanding of sincere submission that Islam seeks.

The Social Danger: Coercion-Produced False Faith

A coercion-based understanding of religion carries serious social risks that extend far beyond individual psychology. Individuals with antisocial personality disorder, in particular, can assume an extraordinarily dangerous role in such environments. These individuals can act without remorse, have no qualms about lying or harming others, and can outwardly project the profile of a good Muslim while internally sowing the seeds of discord that will corrode society from within. A survey of history reveals that false allegiances and coercively imposed religious identities have played a major role in the internal collapse of Islamic societies. The Quran insistently emphasizes the profound distinction between true faith (iman) and hypocrisy (nifaq). What God desires is not false identities shaped under pressure, but sincere submission realized through conscious and free will.

Restoring Islam to Its True Nature

The essence of Islam is founded upon mercy, justice, freedom, and tolerance. The Quran has made this reality clear time and again. When the question of apostasy is assessed from a Quranic perspective, it is defined not as an act requiring worldly punishment, but as a personal choice whose consequences belong to the Hereafter. Narrations such as "Kill whoever changes his religion" contradict the Quran's explicit rulings and reflect not the spirit of the religion, but the political calculations of particular historical periods. To give such narrations a voice in the name of Islam is among the greatest harms that can be done to the faith. As Muslims, understanding and living the religion within the framework of the freedom, compassion, and justice that the Quran teaches is both a religious responsibility and a debt owed to humanity. Faith acquires its true value only when it is born from a free heart. What is obtained through compulsion is not faith — it is nothing but fear.

> "There is no compulsion in religion." (Al-Baqarah, 2:256)

This principle is the very essence of Islam's universal message. And the preservation of this essence carries greater importance today than ever before.

The Evidence System in Sexual Crimes Through the Light of Surah Yusuf: The Quran's 1,400-Year-Old Forensic Approach

The Holy Quran does not merely offer humanity a guide to worship; it also sets forth universal principles aimed at protecting social order, justice, and human dignity. One of the most striking examples of these principles is the story told in Surah Yusuf. To read the surah solely as a moral lesson is to overlook the profound legal and forensic wisdom it contains. The sexual assault attempt experienced by Prophet Yusuf in the house of the Egyptian official and the subsequent evidence evaluation process share a remarkable alignment with the foundational principles of modern forensic medicine and criminal law. Here, we will examine the story of Yusuf from a legal and forensic perspective, exploring the Quran's evidence-based approach to sexual crimes and its contributions to contemporary legal systems.

The Legal Framework of the Story: An Analysis of Events

In verse 23 of Surah Yusuf, it is clearly narrated that the official's wife attempted to

coerce Prophet Yusuf into sexual relations: the doors are locked, Yusuf is cornered, and an explicit invitation is extended. "And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, 'Come, you.' He said, 'I seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made my residence comfortable. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed.'" Prophet Yusuf's refusal with the words "I seek refuge in Allah" symbolizes not merely a personal moral choice, but active resistance against coercion. What is particularly noteworthy here are the preparatory acts carried out by the perpetrator: locking the doors, taking control of the space, and blocking the victim's means of escape. In modern criminal law, these actions are recognized as concrete indicators of an attempted offense.

Verse 24 reveals the psychological depth of the event. While the woman's intent is emphasized as clear, it is stated that Prophet Yusuf was protected from this evil by seeing the evidence of his Lord. "And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her, had he not seen the proof of his Lord. And thus it was that We should avert from him evil and immorality. Indeed, he was of Our sincere servants." This verse demonstrates how determinative inner motivation is in establishing criminal intent, for the law judges not only the act that occurred, but also the will behind it.

The most legally critical point of the story appears in verse 25. As they rushed toward the door, the woman tears Prophet Yusuf's shirt from behind. Upon encountering the official, she immediately reverses the accusation and declares Yusuf the aggressor. This is a classic strategy of victim accusation — a victim-blaming approach still frequently encountered in sexual assault cases today.

The Quran's Evidence System: The Analytical Significance of the Torn Shirt

The most groundbreaking section of the story from a forensic standpoint is found in verse 27: "But if his shirt is torn from the back, then she has lied, and he is of the truthful." This statement is not an ordinary observation; it is a methodology of evidence analysis. The direction in which the shirt was torn reconstructs the physical dynamics of the event. Had the shirt been torn from the front, it could be inferred that Prophet Yusuf had moved toward the woman — that he himself was the aggressor. However, the shirt being torn from the back physically proves that Prophet Yusuf was trying to flee, that the woman grabbed and pulled him from behind, and that the assault was therefore committed by the woman.

This analysis is nothing other than a formulation — articulated 1,400 years ago — of what modern forensic science calls "event reconstruction." The forensic value of clothing damage remains valid today. The angle of the tear, the shape of the rip, and its location can reveal the direction of the attack, the force used, and the positions of the parties relative to one another. The Quran summarized this technical analysis within a single verse and proclaimed that evidence must take precedence over emotional allegations.

The Convergence of Modern Forensic Medicine and Quranic Evidence Theory

Physical Evidence

Contemporary forensic medicine places clothing damage in the primary category of evidence in sexual assault cases. Just as with the shirt in the story of Yusuf, tears, stains, and damage on the clothing of the victim or the perpetrator constitute objective proof of physical contact and coercion. Additionally, bruises, contusions, and abrasions on the victim's body document physical resistance. Trauma findings in the genital area in cases of attempted forcible intercourse are of critical importance in a rape diagnosis.

Biological Evidence

DNA technology has fundamentally transformed sexual crime cases. Semen, saliva, or skin cells found on the victim's body, clothing, or at the scene of the crime allow for the definitive identification of the perpetrator. The area beneath the fingernails is of particular significance: during resistance, skin cells or DNA fragments belonging to the attacker may remain under the victim's nails. These findings both identify the attacker and prove the victim's active resistance. The validity of all such evidence depends on the complete management of a chain of custody — and in the story of Yusuf, the fact that the incident unfolds at the doorway, in the presence of a witness, points to a similarly transparent evidentiary process.

Psychological Evidence

Modern legal systems accept psychological symptoms such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, avoidance behaviors, and sleep disturbances as supporting evidence. The psychological imprint of sexual assault, when evaluated alongside physical evidence, completes the wholeness of the picture.

The Concept of Attempt: The Quran's Foresight

The Quran, in the story of Yusuf, establishes that rape did not actually occur — yet that this attempt gave rise to serious legal and moral consequences. This is the Quranic definition of an attempted offense. In modern criminal law, attempt is punishable as an independent crime provided that criminal intent exists and that the perpetrator has commenced the acts of execution. The following elements in the story are the classic indicators of attempt: restriction of personal liberty through the locking of doors; application of psychological pressure through persistent sexual demands; the occurrence of an attempted physical contact; and causing the victim to engage in active resistance. All of these acts demonstrate that criminal intent had materialized and that the threshold of attempt had been crossed. The Quran clearly established that such actions cannot be dismissed as mere "ill intent" and that they require serious moral and social accountability.

The Crime of Slander and Unsubstantiated Accusation: The Connection to Surah An-Nur

Another critical dimension of the story of Yusuf is that it raises the gravity of false criminal accusation. The official's wife falsely accused Prophet Yusuf in order to conceal her own crime; yet the physical evidence refuted these slanders. The Quran, in verse 4 of Surah An-Nur, defines the false accusation of chaste individuals (the

crime of qadhf) as one of the gravest sins.

Reading these two passages together reveals an important principle of balance: just as the victim must be protected, so too must the accused be protected from false accusation. The evidence system is the foundation of this dual guarantee. In contemporary legal systems, this balance is expressed through the principle of the "presumption of innocence." Unless a crime is proven beyond reasonable doubt, the accused is considered innocent. The Quran concretized this principle through the shirt analysis in the story of Yusuf, and established its theoretical foundation through the prohibition of slander in Surah An-Nur.

From the Quran to Contemporary Law: Lessons to Be Drawn

The Quranic approach offers contemporary legal systems the following core principles:

- Evidence-centered adjudication in sexual crimes is essential. Verbal testimony alone is insufficient; physical, biological, and digital evidence must be systematically collected.

- The crime scene must be protected from the very first moment, and the chain of custody must be managed with meticulous care.

- Psychological support units for victims must be activated, and secondary victimization must be prevented.

- Rape and attempted rape must be treated as separate categories under criminal law, and the crime of attempt must never be regarded as trivial.

- Since false accusations harm the rights of the accused no less than those of the victim, the legal sanctions for unsubstantiated charges must be clear and deterrent.

Surah Yusuf, despite being a text revealed 1,400 years ago, offers one of the most mature examples of an evidence-based approach to the proof of sexual crimes. The analysis based on the direction in which the shirt was torn is, in essence, identical to the event reconstruction technique of modern forensic science. The holistic message of the story is this: the proof of a crime must rest not on emotional accusations but on objective evidence; the victim must be protected, the innocent must be delivered from slander, and the perpetrator must be brought to justice. These principles are the immutable pillars of the universal understanding of justice, and the Quran's foresight in this domain is in profound harmony with contemporary legal and forensic practice.

The Battle of the Trench: A Critical Evaluation of the Traditional Narrative from a Quranic Perspective

One of the most debated events in Islamic history, the Battle of the Trench is presented in traditional Islamic historiography as a significant victory in which Muslims dug a trench to defend Medina and halt a large Quraysh army. However, the bulk of this narrative appears not in the Quran but in hadith and sira sources — which

raises the necessity of subjecting these accounts to Quranic scrutiny. This article attempts to examine the traditional narrative of the Battle of the Trench through a multi-dimensional critical lens in light of Quranic verses, and to question how sound this narrative is theologically, historically, and sociologically.

Traces of the Battle of the Trench in the Quran: What Is Told, What Is Not?

The primary Quranic source associated with the Battle of the Trench is Surah Al-Ahzab. Yet a striking detail is that the word "trench" (khandaq) never appears in this surah. The surah describes a siege environment as follows:

> "When they came upon you from above and from below, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached the throats..." (Al-Ahzab, 10)

These words convey geographical pressure and psychological entrapment. Yet there is no reference whatsoever to a concrete, planned defensive structure like a trench. More importantly, the Quran itself makes clear that what turned the tide of battle was neither a trench nor any military tactic:

> "And We sent against them a wind and forces you did not see." (Al-Ahzab, 9)

This verse is unambiguous: victory came through God's direct intervention. Immaterial, invisible forces determined the outcome of the battle. When the claim that "the trench tactic proposed by Salman al-Farisi won the battle" is placed alongside this, the contradiction between the two narratives becomes apparent. For the Quran presents the victory not as a triumph of human strategy, but as divine grace.

"The Companions of the Trench" in Light of Surah Al-Buruj

One of the most critical internal contradictions of the traditional narrative emerges when confronted with Surah Al-Buruj, verse 4:

> "Cursed were the companions of the trench." (Al-Buruj, 4)

This verse characterizes not those who dug the trench, but the condemned, the punished, the destroyed. These companions of the trench — within whose trench fires were lit — are the perpetrators of oppression who burned believers alive. The context of the verse reveals that digging a trench is not a means of salvation but an instrument of tyranny and strife (fitna). When we apply this to the Battle of the Trench narrative, two options arise:

First option: Surah Al-Buruj was revealed before the Battle of the Trench. In that case, God would have forewarned that trench-diggers stand condemned. It is inconceivable that the Prophet would then adopt the very same method against such a backdrop.

Second option: The surah was revealed after the Battle of the Trench. In that case too, the verse associates trench-digging not with Muslims but with oppressive forces, thereby undermining the claim that Muslims carried out this act.

In both interpretations, the conclusion is the same: digging a trench is incompatible with the Quran's understanding of ethics and the laws of war. Trenches are a symbol of a practice God has condemned, and attributing them to Muslims contradicts the very framework of meaning the Quran itself establishes.

Subjecting the Narrations to Quranic Scrutiny

The Narration of Salman al-Farisi's Proposal

The narration transmitted in traditional sources with reference to Bukhari and Muslim states that Salman al-Farisi proposed digging a trench and that the Prophet accepted this suggestion. However, a fundamental Quranic objection to this narration exists: the Quran states that the Prophet acted through revelation and divine inspiration in the conduct of war:

> "Prepare against them whatever force and tethered horses you are able..." (Al-Anfal, 60)

This verse addresses defensive measures within the framework of general principles; it does not prescribe a specific method such as a trench through revelation. Furthermore, neither is Salman al-Farisi mentioned by name in the Quran, nor is there the slightest indication that he put forward any military proposal. The Battle of the Trench is not even mentioned by name in the Quran. If such an allegedly pivotal event — and such a supposedly critical tactical proposal associated with it — left no trace whatsoever in the Quran, that silence must carry meaning in itself.

The Narration of Prophetic Visions of Future Conquests

A narration in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's Musnad claims that while digging the trench, the Prophet struck a rock and declared, "God will open for us the gates of Constantinople and Persia." Yet the Quran is emphatic on this matter:

> "Say: I have no power to benefit or harm myself except as God wills; had I known the unseen, I would have accumulated much good." (Al-A'raf, 188)

The Prophet spontaneously making prophetic proclamations about future conquests directly contradicts the Quranic framework within which the Prophet is defined. In the Quran, the Prophet receives information about the future only through the channel of revelation. Such narratives reflect a typical pattern in the tradition of hadith fabrication: the retroactive construction of prophecy in the light of history.

The Narrative of Defense Against Numerical Superiority

The account transmitted in Ibn Hisham's Sira — that "three thousand Muslims prevailed over a polytheist army of ten thousand through the trench" — contradicts both the Quran's explanation of victory and the logic of the narrative itself. In Surah Al-Ahzab, the determining factor in victory is clearly divine intervention. A discourse of "trench success" built on military balance of power and tactical superiority is incompatible with the Quran's theological framework.

The Narration of Tying Stones to the Abdomen

A narration in Bukhari and Muslim, which recounts that the Companions tied stones to their stomachs while digging the trench and that the Prophet did the same, is inconsistent with the Quran's general portrayal of the Prophet. The Quran describes the Prophet thus:

> "And indeed, you are of great moral character." (Al-Qalam, 4)

> "God will protect you from the people." (Al-Ma'idah, 67)

Such narrations, which depict the Prophet in a dramatic tableau of physical helplessness, depart from the portrait the Quran draws. The Quran builds the prophetic narrative not upon emotionally charged tales of heroism, but upon principle and truth. Narrations of this kind can be read as fabrications that serve to psychologically manipulate audiences and reinforce feelings of devotion.

The Narration of the Massacre of Banu Qurayza

One of the most controversial narrations is the account that, following the Battle of the Trench, the men of the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza were executed on grounds of treachery. This narration is anchored to the following verse of Surah Al-Ahzab:

> "And He brought down those of the People of the Book who supported them from their strongholds, and cast terror into their hearts; some you killed and some you took captive." (Al-Ahzab, 26)

Yet this verse does not explicitly name the Qurayza Jews; it speaks of them leaving their possessions and being brought down from their fortresses. It contains no explicit command for mass slaughter. Furthermore, such a narrative directly contradicts the Quran's foundational principle of humanity:

> "Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he had slain all mankind." (Al-Ma'idah, 32)

The Quran describes the Prophet as "a mercy to all the worlds" (Al-Anbiya, 107). A figure who personally orders the execution of hundreds is incompatible with this description. Moreover, Surah Muhammad, verse 4, which establishes the fundamental principle regarding prisoners of war, also conflicts with this narrative:

> "When you encounter the disbelievers, strike their observation posts. Once you have greatly weakened them, tighten the bonds. Thereafter, either release them graciously or accept ransom until the burdens of war are lifted." (Muhammad, 4)

This verse clearly sets out the treatment to be given to prisoners after battle: either release without conditions, or ransom. Mass execution is not an option found in the Quran.

Evaluating the Ethics of Trench-Digging from the Perspective of Just War

The Limits of War as Defined by the Quran

The Quran situates warfare within a framework of defined purpose and limits:

> "Fight them until there is no more strife and religion belongs entirely to God." (Al-

Baqarah, 193)

The legitimate basis for war is the elimination of oppression and the safeguarding of freedom of belief. Digging a trench, however, fundamentally creates a psychology of siege: it is an act that encloses a city not from the inside outward but from the outside inward, surrounding its people as though they were inmates of a prison. The Muslim identity as the Quran defines it is premised on open and just struggle:

> "O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice for God's sake." (Al-Ma'idah, 8)

Trenches, more often than not, aim not at direct confrontation but at exerting psychological pressure and laying traps. In this respect, they contradict the Quran's understanding of just war.

Economic and Social Cost

Digging a trench is not merely a military choice but also a severe economic burden and social trauma. Mobilizing the people of Medina — who earned their living through agriculture, trade, and livestock — to dig trenches for weeks would have disrupted fundamental productive activities. This would have paved the way for food shortages, disruption of trade, and social unrest. The Quran explicitly prohibits waste and undertakings that destabilize economic order. Redirecting society's productive energy toward war preparations also conflicts with the Quran's principle of economic justice.

Psychological and Social Cohesion

Trenches, beyond being a physical obstacle, nourish feelings of fear, anxiety, and isolation within society. Individuals in a besieged community experience spiritual collapse; solidarity gives way to distrust. Women, children, and the elderly are those most affected by such an environment. Yet the Quran provides believers with this assurance:

> "It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they might increase in faith." (Al-Fath, 4)

A practice that sows seeds of fear into the hearts of one's own people cannot be said to be in harmony with this principle. The Quran builds Muslim society upon brotherhood, solidarity, and love:

> "The believers are but brothers." (Al-Hujurat, 10)

Trenches, however, divide communities, trap people in a siege mentality, and erode the spirit of brotherhood.

Trenches as Carrying Meaning Beyond History

It is apparent that trench-digging is not merely a historical event but continues to appear in analogous functions today. It is known that in 2015–2016, certain armed groups dug trenches in cities in southeastern Turkey. These trenches served to draw the civilian population into a war environment, to paralyze daily life, and to create an

atmosphere of insecurity and chaos. The logic behind the trenches was not defense but the goal of dividing societies and driving populations into fear. This historical continuity brings an important truth about the concept of trenches to light: trenches transform into structures that besiege not their builders, but the people living within them. In this context, the traditional narrative attributing the Battle of the Trench to Muslims contradicts both the Quran's moral understanding and historical experience. Hypocrites and polytheists may have used trenches precisely for this purpose — both to draw Muslims into conflict and to deepen social polarization.

The Problem of Reliability in Hadith Narrations

All of these narrations concerning the Battle of the Trench were compiled at least two to three generations after the event. Being deemed "authentic" (*sahih*) according to hadith methodology does not mean a narration is free of content that contradicts the Quran. Indeed, the Quran presents itself as the sole reliable guide. When hadith contradict the Quran, the Quran's precedence is beyond dispute. All of the narrations examined above contain serious tensions with the theological, ethical, and historical framework the Quran establishes. This points to the conclusion that these narrations are fabrications.

The Battle of the Trench narrative holds a deeply rooted place in traditional Islamic historiography. Yet when we pass this narrative through the Quran's filter, serious cracks emerge:

The Quran does not mention the Battle of the Trench by name; it never uses the word "trench" in this context; it explains the victory not through a material instrument but through divine intervention; it depicts the companions of the trench in Surah Al-Buruj as condemned; and it builds the law of war upon the principles of direct confrontation, justice, and mercy. The majority of the narrations, meanwhile, are open to question — either because they contain knowledge of the unseen (Al-A'raf, 188), or because they portray the Prophet in ways that contradict the Quran's portrait of him, or because they transmit actions incompatible with the Quran's principles of humanity and compassion.

In this context, the traditional narrative of the Battle of the Trench rests upon a historical construction that runs contrary to the Quran. The claim that Muslims dug the trenches does not align with the Quran's ethics of war, its understanding of prophethood, or its principles of social morality. Islam's view of warfare is built upon halting strife, establishing justice, and allowing faith to be lived freely. Trenches, as every period of history has demonstrated, function as instruments that besiege communities, condemn populations to fear, and fracture solidarity. For this reason, a re-evaluation of this narrative in the light of the Quran and from the perspective of historical criticism is inevitable.

The Compilation of the Quran: Revelation or Compilation?

The process of the Quran's formation constitutes one of the most deeply rooted and debated issues in Islamic history. According to traditional Islamic understanding, the Quran was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad through the angel of revelation by

Allah, and was written down by his companions. However, despite this general acceptance, the question of whether the Quran is merely a passively transmitted text of revelation, or a text that was compiled and arranged through the active involvement of our Prophet Muhammad, occupies an important place in both classical and contemporary Islamic scholarly tradition.

One of the most common names for the Quran is "al-Kitab." This name is not a mere adjective or figurative expression; it is a structural definition pointing to its very essence. In Arabic, the root "kitab" derives from the verb "k-t-b," meaning to write. Therefore, the expression "al-Kitab" carries the meaning of "that which is written" or "a text committed to writing." The Quran bearing this name demonstrates that it is not based solely on an oral transmission tradition, but also exists as a written text. Had the Quran been designed purely as an oral revelation, giving it the name "al-Kitab" would have been meaningless or at least misleading. This naming shows that the Quran carried a written identity from the very beginning, and offers an important clue that our Prophet Muhammad took an active role in this compilation process.

The Hadith Evidence: Write Only the Quran

The following narration attributed to our Prophet Muhammad, found in Islamic hadith literature, directly concerns the matter of the Quran's compilation:

"Do not write anything from me except the Quran. Whoever has written anything from me other than the Quran, let him erase it."

This hadith is traditionally interpreted in conventional circles as a command aimed at preserving the distinction between the Quran and hadith. However, there is a deeper layer of meaning in this narration: our Prophet Muhammad is not merely approving the writing down of the Quran here — he is also consciously distinguishing this act of writing from other oral transmissions. This distinction is a clear indication that the Quran was accorded a special status as a written text. The hadith also reflects how much importance our Prophet Muhammad attached to the written form of the Quran. The recording of the Quran in writing was not a random or late-emerging practice, but a systematic process encouraged and directed by the Prophet himself.

The Sahifa of Fatima, Sister of Umar

The account related to Caliph Umar's conversion to Islam offers remarkably concrete evidence that the Quran was put into written form at an early stage. According to the narration, when Caliph Umar went to his sister Fatima's home, he found in her possession a written page containing the opening portion of Surah Ta-Ha. This page was being carefully preserved and guarded with great diligence.

This event is significant on several levels. First and foremost, it reveals that the Quran was kept in written form by private individuals, and that these written texts were regarded as a trust. Furthermore, it shows that this practice dates back to the Meccan period of Islam — the time when the earliest revelations descended — proving that the writing down of the Quran was not a process initiated after the death of our Prophet Muhammad. Fatima's page is a historical document attesting that the

Quran was preserved in written form during the Prophet's lifetime, and that this process was conducted in a deliberate manner.

The Statement of Abdullah ibn Umar

Another historical piece of evidence for the importance attached to the written form of the Quran is the following statement by Abdullah ibn Umar, one of the prominent companions of our Prophet Muhammad:

"We were forbidden from traveling to enemy territory while carrying the Quran, out of fear that those written texts might fall into enemy hands."

This statement is noteworthy on multiple levels. First, it shows that written texts of the Quran were carried even onto battlefields. Muslims transported these written texts with them, protected them during their travels, and took special precautions to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Second, this narration allows us to perceive the strategic and religious value that the companion generation attributed to the written texts of the Quran. Third, it confirms that the Quran's texts were written down and preserved within a certain framework of order during the time of our Prophet Muhammad. The written Quran was not merely an auxiliary tool, but held the status of a trust requiring protection.

Evidence from the Quran's Own Text

Surah al-Muzzammil, Verse 4

The fourth verse of Surah al-Muzzammil states:

"Aw zid 'alayhi wa rattil il-Qur'ana tartila" — "Or add to it, and recite the Quran in measured, arranged form."

The word "tartil" carries a critical meaning in this verse. It encompasses the meanings of arranging in an orderly and measured manner, presenting in a certain sequence, and systematic organization. This verse tasks our Prophet Muhammad with presenting the Quran in a specific order and arrangement. This command shows that the Quran underwent a conscious process of organization, and that this process was ordered by Allah Himself to our Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the compilation process was carried out not as a human preference, but within the framework of a divine directive.

Surah al-Tur, Verse 2

Surah al-Tur includes the following expression:

"Wa kitabim mastur" — "By a book inscribed, line by line."

The word "mastur" here means "written, set down in lines." This verse explicitly defines the Quran as a written text, drawing attention to the importance of its written form.

Surah al-Qalam, Verse 1

Surah al-Qalam, regarded as one of the earliest surahs to be revealed, opens with these words:

"Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe."

This verse shows that the act of writing received divine approval from the very earliest period of Islam. It is highly significant that "the pen" and "writing" are foregrounded in one of the first revelations. This indicates that the written form of the Quran was divinely planned as part of the sacred message itself.

Surah Abasa, Verses 11–14

The relevant verses of Surah Abasa state:

"No! Indeed, it is a reminder. So whoever wills may remember it. It is inscribed in honored sheets — exalted and purified."

The expression "honored sheets" is a direct reference to the existence of the Quranic text in a written and tangible form. These sheets are described as "exalted and purified," thus emphasizing that they possess both spiritual and physical integrity. This expression certifies that the Quran carries sanctity not only as an oral tradition, but also as a physical object.

The Historical Context of the Written Quran

The Prophet's role in the compilation process cannot be considered independently of his careful awareness of social and economic conditions. In the early years of Islam, Muslims lived under intense pressure and economic hardship. Writing materials were scarce, literacy was limited, and the possibilities for collective organization were quite restricted. However, these conditions changed fundamentally over time. With the migration to Medina, Islamic society underwent a significant transformation. Resources increased, the division of labor among companions developed, and the infrastructure necessary for committing the Quran to writing was established. Both the Prophet himself wrote and recorded the Quran, and he appointed scribes of revelation to ensure that every new verse was recorded in writing. This historical process shows that the compilation of the Quran was not an accidental or delayed undertaking. On the contrary, this process was carried out systematically and gradually under the supervision of our Prophet Muhammad.

The Relationship Between Revelation and Compilation

It is of great importance at this point to draw a fundamental distinction. The compilation of the Quran neither eliminates nor diminishes its nature as revelation. On the contrary, these two dimensions complement one another. While divine revelation determined the content and essence, our Prophet Muhammad gave this content written form within a specific arrangement and order. The command of "tartil" in Surah al-Muzzammil also supports this understanding. Allah did not merely reveal the words; He also determined how they were to be arranged. Our Prophet Muhammad acted within the framework of these divine directives and conveyed the Quran to humanity as both an oral and a written legacy.

The history of the Quran is not merely a history of revelation; it is equally a history of deliberate compilation. Traditional hadith sources, early Islamic history, and the Quran's own internal text all demonstrate that this scripture was given a specific order, arrangement, and written form through the active participation of our Prophet Muhammad. The name "al-Kitab," the page of Fatima, the testimony of Abdullah ibn Umar, and the relevant verses in Surahs al-Qalam, al-Tur, al-Muzzammil, and Abasa all prove that the compilation of the Quran extends back to the time of our Prophet Muhammad and that this process was shaped under his own guidance.

Within this framework, defining the Quran solely as an oral legacy of revelation or solely as a human editorial effort does not fully reflect the truth. The Quran is a singular text inscribed in human history as the joint product of divine content, prophetic arrangement, and the labor of the companions. This holistic perspective provides an indispensable foundation for comprehending both the sanctity of the Quran and its historical reality simultaneously.

Dogs, Islam, and Science: A Look Beyond Misunderstandings

Dogs in Human History

Dogs have been among humanity's oldest and most loyal companions. Archaeological findings suggest that dog domestication dates back approximately 15,000 years. Serving side by side with humans in hunting, herding, guarding, and even therapy, dogs are not merely animals — they are beings that have claimed a meaningful place within cultures, beliefs, and social structures. Yet in parts of the Islamic world, a deep hesitation — even fear — toward dogs prevails. Judgments such as "keeping a dog is forbidden," "angels do not enter a home where a dog lives," or "dogs are impure" have become embedded in the public mind, gradually perceived as definitive religious rulings. In reality, these claims lack genuine religious grounding; they are products of cultural bias and misinterpretation. This article examines the religious perception of dogs through a Quran-centered lens, presents what science has revealed about dogs, and approaches Turkey's deepening stray dog crisis from a humane, ethical, and religious perspective.

Dogs in Islam: Facts and Misconceptions

How Does the Quran Speak of Dogs?

The most striking Quranic reference to dogs appears in Surah Al-Kahf. Among the People of the Cave — who slept for many years under God's protection — there is a dog. The relevant verse reads: "And their dog stretched out its forelegs at the entrance." (Al-Kahf, 18) This verse portrays the dog as the faithful companion of believers sheltered under divine protection — not in a negative light, but in a natural, even dignified manner. The dog here is neither an element of impurity nor a symbol of ill omen, but a loyal and protective friend. Notably, not a single verse in the Quran contains an explicit ruling that keeping a dog is forbidden. Hunting with dogs is expressly permitted in Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 4: "They ask you what has been made lawful for them. Say: Lawful for you are good things, and what you have taught the hunting animals to catch..." This verse clearly establishes the dog's legitimate status

as a hunting companion.

Do Angels Refuse to Enter a Home Where a Dog Lives?

This widespread belief is attributed to certain hadith narrations. However, the majority of these narrations have been assessed by hadith scholars as weak or fabricated. Moreover, when such statements are stripped of their context, they take on entirely different meanings. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, dogs were an inseparable part of daily life as herding and hunting animals. Within such a social reality, a blanket prohibition on keeping dogs — or declaring them impure — would be historically inconsistent. Furthermore, the phrase "a home the angels do not enter" must be considered in broader perspective. If applied literally, the daily lives of thousands of Muslims who work with dogs, stand guard alongside them, or live with guide dogs would become a tangle of religious complications. Yet Islam is a religion of ease, one that honors the natural bond humans form with nature and animals.

The Issue of Dog Feces: A Distorted Argument

One of the arguments advanced in anti-dog discourse is the claim that dog feces pose serious health risks, bolstered by selective use of scientific data. Yet the scientific facts paint a very different picture. Cat feces carry far more serious health risks than dog feces. The parasite Toxoplasma gondii can have extremely dangerous consequences — particularly for pregnant women and immunocompromised individuals — and it is transmitted primarily through cat feces. While parasites such as Giardia and hookworm can be found in dog feces, the risk of toxoplasmosis is much lower. Notably, those who invoke dog feces to declare dogs "forbidden" do not apply the same standard to cat feces — a inconsistency that plainly reveals the prejudicial, rather than scientific, foundation of their argument.

Dogs Through the Eyes of Science: Beyond Loyalty

Physiological Effects

A comprehensive study conducted by Beck and Katcher in 1983 demonstrated that contact with dogs produces direct and measurable effects on human physiology. According to their findings, individuals who interact with dogs experience a slower heart rate, reduced blood pressure, and more regulated breathing. Decreases in muscle tension and notably lower cortisol levels were also observed. In short, simply touching a dog or spending a brief time with one has a profound calming effect on the human body. The American Heart Association has officially documented the positive effects of dog ownership on cardiovascular health. Dog owners, through the regular walking habits their pets encourage, lead more active lives — meaningfully reducing their risk of obesity, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. Dog ownership has also been noted to play a protective role in preventing sudden cardiac events.

Mental and Psychological Benefits

Dogs' contributions to mental health are as well-documented as their physical

benefits. Clinical studies support the therapeutic function of the human-dog relationship for individuals struggling with depression, loneliness, and chronic anxiety. Therapy dogs have been shown to notably alleviate symptoms in individuals experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder. Among elderly individuals, dog ownership has been found to reduce social isolation and slow cognitive decline. Oxytocin — widely known as the "love hormone" — rises in both humans and dogs following eye contact between the two. This finding demonstrates that the bond between dog and human is not merely habit or conditioning, but a genuine mutual attachment experience with neurobiological foundations.

Early Warning and Medical Detection

Dogs' sensory capacity far exceeds human perception. There are documented cases of dogs detecting cancerous tumors in their owners' bodies through scent. "Seizure alert dogs" that can sense epileptic episodes sometimes hours in advance, and "medical detection dogs" that smell drops in blood sugar in diabetic patients and sound the alarm, have become recognized components of the healthcare sector. Guide dogs for the visually impaired, alert dogs for the hearing impaired, and therapy dogs for children on the autism spectrum concretely demonstrate that dogs are not merely emotional support animals, but functional medical partners.

Stray Dogs: A Test of Societal Conscience

The Scope of the Problem

Turkey has been intensely debating the stray dog issue in recent years across its political, social, and ethical dimensions. On one side stand citizens who have been harmed by — or live in fear of — dog attacks; on the other, animal rights advocates who oppose the mass killing of dogs. The debate, caught between these two camps, at times overshadows the genuine search for solutions. Correctly reading the situation is a prerequisite for addressing it at its roots. The existence of stray dogs is the product of a prolonged absence of sustainable policy. For decades, sterilization, vaccination, and adoption programs were neglected in Turkey — making a reckoning with an uncontrolled population inevitable.

The Religious Legitimacy of Killing: A Critical Question

In Surah An-Nisa, verse 119, Satan declares: "...I will command them and they will change the creation of Allah..." This verse characterizes harming what God has created and disrupting His order as a satanic act. Within this framework, justifying the mass slaughter of animals as a means of solving a social problem is deeply problematic from a religious standpoint. The many narrations reflecting the Prophet Muhammad's understanding of compassion toward animals reinforce this perspective. Stories of a woman condemned to hell for mistreating a cat, and of a man forgiven his sins for giving water to a dog, illustrate how comprehensive and compassionate Islam's view of life and living beings truly is.

Sustainable Solutions

The path to resolving the stray dog problem humanely, scientifically, and effectively

lies in management, not killing. Several key strategies stand out:

- Expanding Sterilization and Vaccination Programs: The "trap-neuter-vaccinate-return" model, successfully implemented in many countries, controls stray dog populations over the long term. It is both humane and cost-effective.

- Increasing Shelter Capacity: Current shelter conditions fall far short of animal welfare standards. Shelters significantly strengthened in capacity and quality would both reduce street populations and accelerate adoption processes.

- Developing an Adoption Culture: Overcoming society's bias toward dogs is the single greatest obstacle to increasing adoption rates. Embracing a more inclusive and science-based language regarding dogs in educational institutions, the media, and religious discourse would help cultivate this culture.

- Municipal and Civil Society Cooperation: Coordinated collaboration among local governments, animal rights organizations, and volunteer communities would enable the effective use of resources and the implementation of lasting solutions.

- Dog Training Centers: Establishing specialist training centers for potentially aggressive or poorly socialized dogs would both help those dogs become more people-friendly and lay the groundwork for society to coexist more safely with them.

Science, Religion, and Compassion Stand on the Same Side

Dogs have been faithful companions throughout humanity's journey of thousands of years. Approaches that declare them "impure," "forbidden," or "dangerous" are grounded in neither the spirit of the Quran nor the findings of science. On the contrary, they are misconceptions generated by cultural bias, fabricated narrations, and superficial readings. The Quran honored the dog as the companion of believers sheltered under divine protection; science has documented the dog's profound contributions to human health, psychology, and societal well-being through countless studies. These two domains are in remarkable agreement on this matter: both point not toward excluding dogs, but toward humane coexistence with them.

Killing stray dogs is neither a practical solution nor an ethical stance. The lasting solution lies in a holistic approach that brings together scientific methods, religious compassion, and social responsibility. To see the dog as "a wise creature of God's making" and to approach it with that awareness is the only path consistent with both conscience and faith.

Quran-Centered Understanding of Islam: Wealth, Power, and Civilization

The Guiding Principle of the Quran

The Quran is not merely a guide for worship but a universal source governing all dimensions of life. Allah has affirmed its sufficiency with these words:

"Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them?" (Al-Ankabut, 51)

Despite this, the Islamic world has developed a dependence on secondary sources — hadith collections, jurisprudential schools, and the sayings of Sufi masters — alongside the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad's own complaint is conveyed to us in the Quran:

"And the Messenger has said, 'O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Quran as a thing abandoned.'" (Al-Furqan, 30)

The Life of the Prophet Muhammad: Poverty or Wealth?

The Traditional Narrative

In traditional Islamic understanding, the Prophet is frequently portrayed as having embraced poverty and turned away from worldly blessings. Several narrations are cited to support this view, including one attributed to Aisha:

"There were months in which we would not light a fire; we lived on nothing but dates and water." (Bukhari, At'ima 23)

And another attributed to Ibn Abbas:

"The Messenger of Allah and his family would spend many consecutive nights hungry, with no evening meal." (Tirmidhi, Zuhd 38)

Blended with Sufi tradition, these narrations gave rise to the idea that poverty is a virtue in Islam — even a path to salvation. This outlook, symbolized by the phrase "a morsel and a robe," led to a deep passivity among Muslim communities and a profound indifference toward worldly achievement.

The Quran's Testimony

The Quran tells a strikingly different story. Surah Ad-Duha serves as a summary of divine blessings bestowed upon the Prophet:

"And He found you poor and made you self-sufficient." (Ad-Duha, 8)

This verse is remarkable on several levels. First, Allah confirms that the Prophet was indeed poor at the outset. More importantly, it declares that this was not a permanent state — through God's grace, he became wealthy. This directly undermines the poverty emphasis found in the narrations. The fifth verse of the same surah reinforces this:

"And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied." (Ad-Duha, 5)

God's promise is clear: the Prophet would be given abundantly, both in this world and the next. Surah At-Tawbah adds a communal dimension:

"…their resentment stems only from the fact that Allah and His Messenger have enriched them through His bounty." (At-Tawbah, 74)

This verse, describing the grudge held by hypocrites, explicitly states that Allah enriched both the Prophet and the Companions around him. Wealth, therefore, was a

shared reality of the early Muslim community.

Wealth and Power in the Lives of the Messengers: A Quranic Pattern

This prosperity was not an exception but part of God's established pattern toward His messengers. The Quran clearly recounts that many messengers were endowed with material power and means.

The Messenger Joseph was granted authority and governance in Egypt:

"And thus We established Joseph in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, and We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good." (Yusuf, 56)

The family of Abraham was given the Book, wisdom, and a great kingdom:

"Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty? But We had already given the family of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom and conferred upon them a great kingdom." (An-Nisa, 54)

A compelling coherence runs through these verses: God's grace is not confined to spiritual gifts. Alongside the Book and wisdom, dominion, power, and material means are counted among the divine blessings granted to messengers.

Sufism's Understanding of Poverty: A Departure from the Quran

Sufi tradition, particularly within the framework of zuhd (asceticism), has embraced withdrawal from worldly possessions as a high spiritual virtue. Phrases such as "do not attach your heart to the world," "discipline the self," and "eat little, drink little, sleep little" have been internalized as the essence of Islamic morality across generations.

Yet upon examination, this understanding is found to rest largely on non-Quranic sources and fabricated narrations. In the Quran, zuhd does not mean abstaining from worldly blessings but rather not becoming heartfully attached to them. Allah says:

"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and do not forget your share of the world." (Al-Qasas, 77)

This verse does not command abandonment of the world but calls for a balance between this world and the next.

Power, Preparedness, and the Necessity of Civilization

The Quran's view of civilization stands in direct opposition to Sufi passivism. In Surah Al-Anfal, Allah issues a direct command to the believers:

"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know but whom Allah knows." (Al-Anfal, 60)

Three critical elements stand out here:

First, the obligation to develop capacity. The phrase "whatever you are able" commands Muslims to mobilize all available means — not only military, but scientific, technological, and economic.

Second, the principle of deterrence. The word "terrify" shows that power is to be used not for war, but as a tool to preserve peace, security, and stability.

Third, a forward-looking vision. The phrase "others besides them whom you do not know but whom Allah knows" points to the need for preparedness against future threats — necessitating a long-term civilizational perspective.

Understanding the Decline of the Islamic World

The scientific, economic, and political decline of the Islamic world over the past two centuries is not a simple historical accident. At its root lies a religious understanding severed from the Quran and deeply misinterpreted:

- A religion that presents poverty as virtue erodes motivation for wealth creation and economic development.

- A discourse that portrays the world as transient and deceptive renders scientific research and technological progress meaningless.

- An environment in which belief in destiny has been converted into passivity destroys the collective will needed for social transformation.

The Quran, by contrast, assigns humanity the role of God's vicegerent on earth — and fulfilling that role requires thinking, producing, building, and governing with justice.

The Meaning and Call of a Return to the Quran

The content of this necessary transformation can be summarized as follows:

A recalibration of religious understanding is essential. Hadith and jurisprudential literature must not be discarded entirely, but the Quran's sufficiency must be accepted as the primary criterion.

The Islamic legitimacy of wealth and power must be clearly affirmed. Believers must embrace material development not as a sin or danger but as God's grace and a requirement of their duty as servants.

Civilizational construction must be recognized as an act of worship. Productivity in science, technology, art, and economics is the contemporary expression of the Quranic command to "prepare power."

Quranic education must be made accessible to all. Every Muslim should be encouraged to read and understand the Quran directly — free from intermediaries and blind imitation of religious authority.

The Islam the Quran presents is grounded not in poverty but in just prosperity; not in passivity but in active civilizational construction; not in imitation but in rational freedom. The Prophet Muhammad and the messengers before him are living

examples of this understanding. God gave His messengers material power and means, and commanded them to use those means with equity and justice.

The lament of the Messenger conveyed in Al-Furqan 30 still reverberates with full force today: the Quran has been abandoned. And this abandonment is not merely an individual failing — it is the most fundamental cause of a civilization's collapse. Returning to the Quran is not simply a religious choice; it is a civilizational imperative for the future of the Islamic world and of humanity itself.

Just Governance, Secularism, and Human Dignity in the Light of the Quran

Throughout history, humanity has felt the need to live within an ordered society — appointing rulers, building institutions, and establishing laws to maintain that order. Yet over time, deviations from justice, along with the lust for power and authority, have emerged as persistent flaws. The gap between the governed and those who govern has widened, reducing the former to servants and elevating the latter to masters. This picture stands in direct contradiction to the principles set forth in the Quran. The Quran defines governance not as a privilege but as a responsibility. Allah says:

> "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice." (An-Nisa, 4:58)

This verse grounds the legitimacy of political authority in a single foundation: justice and merit. The ruler is the trustee of the people. That trust means serving the people and governing with justice. To be a ruler is not to possess power — it is to be the servant of the people.

The Character of the Ruler: Servant or Master?

The caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab stands as the finest example of this sense of responsibility. When the Sasanian ambassador arrived in Medina and found Caliph Umar asleep beneath an ordinary tree, that moment was etched into the memory of history as a symbol of justice and humility. The leader of a powerful state is found among the people, not in a palace — not above them, but a part of them.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad is the deepest expression of this same understanding. He never elevated himself to a position apart from the people; he sat at the same table and shared the same life with them. Even in the Quranic model of prophethood, the principle is not coercion or imposition, but proclamation and respect for free will. This makes it abundantly clear that Islamic governance is fundamentally incompatible with any form of authoritarianism.

History also offers the perfect opposite of this model, presented in the Quran with striking force: Pharaoh. The Quran presents Pharaoh not as a governance model but as a warning. As recounted in Al-Qasas 4, he divided his people; in An-Nazi'at 24, he deified himself; in Az-Zukhruf 51–54, he belittled and deceived the people and ruled through tyranny. Through this example, the Quran offers a clear critique of all despotic, totalitarian, and idolatrous forms of rule.

Pharaoh's Mask of Democracy

In Al-A'raf 113–114, the sorcerers come to Pharaoh and ask, "Will there indeed be a reward for us if we are the victors?" and Pharaoh answers, "Yes, and you will certainly be among those brought near." This exchange lays bare the tendency of power to form any alliance necessary to preserve itself. The sorcerers are quintessential opportunists, motivated solely by a share of power rather than any moral concern. Pharaoh skillfully exploits this opportunism to keep the people pacified.

In Ta-Ha 59, Moses sets the encounter for "the day of the festival" and "let the people be assembled in the forenoon." The scene Pharaoh stages before the public is presented as if it were democratic transparency. But this is not democracy — it is theatre. The people are spectators; they offer only their attention, not their will. In genuine democracy, the people have a voice; in this scene, the people serve merely as a decoration of legitimacy.

In Ash-Shu'ara 49, Pharaoh says to the sorcerers: "You have believed before I gave you permission... I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all." Democracy, in Pharaoh's worldview, exists only for those who think as he does; no rights are granted to those who oppose him. The mindset that says "those who do not think like me should not think at all" annihilates thought and freedom entirely.

These narratives are more than historical accounts — they are universal warnings. Today too, there are regimes that manufacture legitimacy through spectacle and manipulate the will of the people. The Quran recounts these stories precisely so that societies and individuals remain vigilant against the repetition of history.

The Responsibility of the People: Being a Conscious Citizen

The assumption of unjust forms of governance is not solely the fault of rulers — it is also the problem of the governed. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the individual's capacity and obligation to think and question:

> "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Az-Zumar, 39:9)

This question is not mere philosophical rhetoric; it is a political warning. The people must not be content with being passive members of a collective — they must be conscious citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities. Traditional authoritarian structures keep individuals from questioning and instill a culture of blind obedience. Islam, however, counsels not blind submission but action guided by reason and revelation.

Voting, within this framework, is not merely a right but a profound responsibility. When choosing those to whom we entrust governance, it is obligatory to look for knowledge, merit, and justice. Individuals who remain politically uninformed — who go to the ballot box without any analysis — have taken the trust away from those who deserve it and handed it to those who do not. This is in direct contradiction to the Quranic principle of justice.

The Principles of Just Governance

Drawing from the Quran, the principles that define just governance can be summarized under the following headings:

Shura and Participation: The phrase in Ash-Shura 38 — "and whose affairs are conducted by mutual consultation" — establishes that collective decisions cannot be made unilaterally. Just governance rests not on authoritarian structures but on a culture of deliberation and participation. Opposition is an inseparable part of this process; a genuine opposition that reflects the will of the people provides a check on governance.

Merit and Trust: Positions of governance and public office are trusts. Entrusting these positions to those who are qualified demands that merit be the governing standard in every domain — from political appointments to the judiciary, from education to the economy.

Rule of Law and Judicial Independence: All actions and decisions of the state must conform to the law, and the judiciary must never be subjected to political pressure. Fair trial is the guarantee that every individual possesses equal rights.

Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination: The Quran rejects discrimination based on race, lineage, gender, or class in governance. No one belongs by birth to a ruling class or a governed class. Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religious belief, or economic status must be resolutely combated.

Transparency and Accountability: The proper use of public resources, the oversight of officials, and the fight against corruption are indispensable to just governance. Waste and bribery are behaviors explicitly condemned in the Quran.

Social Justice: Equality of opportunity must be ensured in the distribution of societal resources, and poverty must be combated. It is a fundamental responsibility of the state to give priority to areas with high unemployment and to create employment-guaranteed programs for disadvantaged groups. Universal access to quality education is the foundation upon which a free and conscious society is built.

Standing Against Oppression: In Hud 113 it is said: "And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire." This verse draws a clear red line for both individuals and governments. To remain silent in the face of oppression is to become complicit in it.

The Removal of Rulers: In An-Nur 21 it is commanded: "O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan." If a ruler acts contrary to the Quran, leads society away from Islam, and persists in injustice, Muslims have both the right and the responsibility to remove that ruler.

The Question of Secularism: What Does the Quran Say?

When the question of secularism — so frequently debated in the modern world — is examined from a Quranic perspective, a more nuanced picture emerges. The French-

origin conception of secularism removes religion entirely from the public sphere and grounds law in a purely secular foundation. According to this understanding, religion must be confined to the individual conscience and must not interfere with social and political life.

The Quran finds this approach incomplete. Yet a critical distinction must be made here: there are points where the Quran converges with secularism, and points where it diverges.

Points of Convergence: The Quran recognizes freedom of religion and conscience as a fundamental right and absolutely forbids compulsion. In Al-Baqarah 256 it is said: "There is no compulsion in religion." In Al-Kafirun 6: "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." These principles confirm that no one shall be subjected to pressure on account of their belief or disbelief. A person may choose to wear the veil or choose a different way of life. No pressure may be applied to an atheist, a Christian, a Jew, or a Muslim on account of their faith. The Quran explicitly affirms this freedom.

Points of Divergence: At the same time, the Quran does not accept the total exclusion of religion from society, law, and the state. For the Quran is not merely a book of personal belief; it is a comprehensive guide to life, containing social, legal, political, and economic ordinances. In Al-Ma'idah 44 it is said: "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed — it is those who are the disbelievers." In Al Imran 66, the reminder "Why do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge?" emphasizes that human reason alone is insufficient to establish absolute justice.

The model proposed by the Quran rests on two fundamental principles: first, freedom of religion and conscience — no one may be persecuted for their belief or disbelief; second, social and legal order must be shaped according to the standards revealed by Allah. This balance converges with some dimensions of modern secularism while rejecting others. It is neither oppressive nor imposing; on the contrary, it envisions a just system in which every belief can coexist in peace, yet where those who govern are accountable to Allah.

The Unity of Muslims and the Quran's Call

Allah commands Muslims to act in unity as one community:

> "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." (Al Imran, 3:103)

Division is not accepted in Islam. Muslims must therefore unite around shared values and uphold those values in their understanding of governance. The selection of leaders must be made according to Islamic criteria; a believer who performs prayer, gives zakat, and is committed to the commandments of Allah must be brought forward. In Al-Ma'idah 55 it is said: "Your ally is none but Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed — those who establish prayer and give zakah."

Yet this unity is never grounded in racism, class distinction, or discrimination. The Quran rejects hierarchies of lineage, race, gender, and class in governance. No one

belongs by birth to a ruling class or a governed class. This universal principle of equality reveals the liberating dimension of the Islamic understanding of governance.

A Meaning-Centered Model of Governance

The Quran advocates neither theocracy, nor autocracy, nor unconstrained democracy. The model proposed by the Quran is grounded in a moral and just understanding of popular governance. Justice, shura, merit, equality, transparency, and respect for human dignity form the foundational pillars of this model.

The Quranic story of Pharaoh is not a mere historical narrative. It is a universal warning against all forms of power that manufacture legitimacy through spectacle, manipulate the will of the people, and silence criticism through oppression. Pharaoh — negotiating with his sorcerers — has appeared throughout history in many guises and continues to do so.

The true path to salvation passes through the way shown by the Quran: the human being is the servant of Allah alone and is not obliged to bow before anyone. The ruler is the servant of the people; the people, as conscious citizens, must defend their rights, question authority, and demand justice.

Muslims must champion not a merely formal but a meaning-centered model of governance — a model that draws lessons from the warnings of history, elevates human dignity, and puts justice into practice not merely as rhetoric but as a lived reality. The Quran is both the compass and the touchstone of this model.

Justice, Illicit Gain, and Social Order in Islam in Light of Verse 188 of Surah Al-Baqarah

Islam is not merely a religion of individual worship and moral rules; it is a comprehensive way of life that regulates social existence, places justice and righteousness at the forefront. One of the cornerstones of this order is ensuring justice in economic and social relations, preventing illicit gains, and protecting social trust. One of the most explicit and comprehensive verses of the Quran on this subject is verse 188 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly, nor send it in bribery to the rulers in order that they might aid you to consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know."

Although this verse is sometimes presented in certain translations as merely prohibiting bribery, its meaning is far broader. This divine command — encompassing every form of conduct that undermines justice, the abuse of power and authority, manipulation, and unfair competition — continues to illuminate contemporary societies across the centuries.

The Scope of "Consuming Wealth Unjustly"

The phrase "consuming wealth unjustly" (batıl ile yemek) carries an extremely broad meaning in Islam. Batıl refers to every path of gain that is illegitimate, devoid of lawfulness, and lacking a sound foundation — encompassing usury, gambling, deception, fraud, coercion, bribery, and unlawful seizure. This verse covers not only

overt and direct forms of unjust gain, but also subtler and more concealed forms of injustice. Indeed, every action that undermines justice in society, every practice that tramples another's rights, and every gain obtained in exchange for favors granted to a clerical or ruling class falls within the scope of this verse.

From a contemporary perspective, "gaining wealth through illicit means" manifests in the following ways:

In the economic sphere: Market manipulation, hoarding, profiteering, misleading advertising, and unfair competition.

In the legal sphere: False testimony, concealment of evidence, attempts to influence the judiciary, and improperly obtained court victories.

In the political sphere: Electoral fraud, vote-buying, and the use of public resources for partisan purposes.

In the administrative sphere: Nepotism, favoritism, and backdoor dealings that enable unmeritorious appointments.

All of these examples are practices contrary to the spirit of the verse, inflicting social wounds that extend far beyond individual injustices.

The Concept of Hukkām: The Responsibility of Rulers

One of the most striking elements of the verse is the use of the word hukkām. This Arabic plural noun, meaning judges, rulers, and administrators, encompasses everyone who holds authority and decision-making power: judges, governors, bureaucrats, public officials, and every individual who exercises power at an institutional level.

In Islamic political philosophy, the ruler is the trustee of society. The authority granted to them is not an entitlement for personal gain, but a trust bestowed by God and society to be used for the public good, justice, and the establishment of right. To betray this trust — that is, to use the authority of governance to acquire unjust gain, to show favoritism, or to become an instrument of oppression — ranks among the gravest sins prohibited by this verse.

For those in positions of authority, acting with fairness and integrity is not merely a matter of personal virtue. When these individuals deviate from righteousness, a chain reaction of injustice follows: courts become corrupt, those seeking justice are victimized, the powerful receive protection, and the weak are oppressed. Thus, the individual sin of the ruler transforms into an institutional collapse affecting society as a whole.

Nepotism and Unmeritorious Appointments: An Invisible Injustice

One of the most important yet most overlooked issues within Islam's understanding of justice is unmeritorious appointments and nepotism. Placing someone less qualified than the rightful candidate in a position — though it may appear to cause no direct harm to anyone on the surface — inflicts profoundly deep social damage.

First and foremost, the right of the deserving person is usurped. This corresponds precisely to the Quranic prohibition of "consuming another's right through illicit means." Second, when an unqualified person assumes the role, the institution's efficiency declines, quality diminishes, and citizens suffer. Third, the nepotistic system gradually entrenches itself; "cultivating connections" rather than working hard and achieving becomes the measure of success. This is a cultural decay that will fundamentally undermine society's productivity and dynamism.

Electoral Fraud and Democratic Manipulation: A Modern Form of *Batıl*

One of the most widespread and most destructive practices contrary to the spirit of the verse in our time is interference in electoral processes. Vote-buying, manipulation of voter rolls, one-sided use of media, weaponizing bureaucratic channels against political opponents, and similar practices amount to a betrayal of a society's own will.

Elections are the mechanism by which modern societies reflect their collective will and legitimize governance. When this mechanism is corrupted through fraud, it destroys not only the person elected, but the entire political system, the legitimacy of institutions, and citizens' trust in the state. Assessed from the perspective of Islam's principles of trust and justice, such distortion of the public will amounts to the simultaneous usurpation of the rights of thousands of people.

In this context, the phrase in Verse 188 of Al-Baqarah — "nor send it to the rulers in order that they might aid you to consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin" — encompasses not only material wealth, but political power, public representation, and collective rights as well. For to steal a society's will is to rob that society of its most fundamental right.

Social Trust and Institutional Collapse

The foundation of justice is trust. Social coexistence becomes possible only to the extent that individuals trust that courts will be fair, elections will be honest, public officials will act impartially, and they will be able to obtain what they deserve. When this trust is damaged, the social fabric begins to unravel.

Bribery, nepotism, and manipulation may benefit a handful of people in the short term. But in the long run, these practices become increasingly normalized, institutionalized, and incorporated into the ordinary functioning of the system. From this point on, the honest person is placed at a disadvantage — excluded as someone who does not "play by the rules of the system." In such a society, integrity becomes a worthless and even punished stance.

This vicious cycle also heralds the moral collapse of society. Ibn Khaldun identified this dynamic centuries ago and attributed the decline of civilizations largely to this kind of moral erosion. The corruption of state institutions, the ruling class losing its accountability to the people, and the dysfunction of justice mechanisms are among the factors that precipitated the end of many powerful civilizations throughout history.

The Individual and Social Dimensions of the Principle of Justice

Islam's understanding of justice encompasses not only state and legal institutions, but also the individual's daily life. Every Muslim bears responsibility both for their own actions and for the justice of the society in which they live. The Quran explicitly establishes this individual responsibility through the principle of amr bil ma'ruf wa nahy 'an al-munkar — enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Understood in this context, refusing to offer a bribe when pressured, or declining an offer of nepotistic favoritism, is not merely a matter of personal integrity; it is an active contribution to the welfare of society. Conversely, remaining silent about, tolerating, or participating in such practices is not only a personal sin, but an evasion of social responsibility.

In Islamic moral literature, this situation is frequently addressed in the context of "excuses put forward by the devil." Justifications such as "everyone does it," "if I don't, someone else will," or "that's just how the system works" do not absolve the individual of moral responsibility; on the contrary, they make that individual complicit in perpetuating the system.

The Institutional Foundations of Justice in Islamic Civilization

Throughout Islamic history, there are many examples of justice being treated not merely as an individual virtue, but as an institutional necessity. The Diwan al-Mazalim (court of grievances), the institution of the qadi (judge), the muhtasib (market inspector), and various oversight mechanisms can be regarded as historical efforts toward the institutionalization of justice. These institutions were designed to ensure rulers were held accountable, the grievances of the people were heard, and justice was served.

It can be argued that today's mechanisms — an independent judiciary, an elected legislature, freedom of the press, and civil society organizations — are the functional heirs of these institutions. Islam's understanding of justice supports the strengthening of such mechanisms, the increased oversight of rulers, and the prevention of monopolies of power.

Justice Is the Foundation of Society

Verse 188 of Surah Al-Baqarah continues to speak across centuries as the voice of a universal principle that transcends time and place. In this verse, not only bribery, but every action and disposition that generates gain through illicit means, undermines justice, and erodes social trust is condemned.

Electoral fraud, nepotism, bribery, favoritism, false testimony, interference with the judiciary, and abuse of power all share a common denominator: usurping another's rights and disrupting the order of justice. These acts inflict social wounds far beyond individual sins, wear down institutions, and create vicious cycles that may persist for generations.

Islam's call to justice invites the individual to act with honesty and equity in all circumstances, and calls upon society and the state to institutionalize justice and dismantle structures that legitimize injustice. A society in which everyone can obtain

their due, merit prevails, rulers are accountable, and courts function independently is the social order closest to Islam's ideal of justice.

Justice is not merely an ideal; it is the indispensable condition for societies to endure, for civilizations to be sustained, and for humanity to live with dignity. To find this truth expressed with such clarity and comprehensiveness in a verse revealed fourteen centuries ago is the most beautiful proof that the Quran speaks not to a single age, but to all ages.

Child Circumcision from a Quran-Centered Perspective: A Religious, Medical, and Ethical Assessment

Male child circumcision, widely accepted as a deeply rooted tradition in the Islamic world, has historically been practiced as a religious obligation without question. Yet the roots of this practice trace not to the Quran — Islam's primary source — but to pre-Islamic Middle Eastern cultures and the traditions of the jahiliyya (age of ignorance). Here, we attempt to examine circumcision through a Quran-centered perspective, within the framework of modern medical ethics, and in the light of human rights principles.

The Place of Circumcision in the Quran: The Meaning of Absence

The Quran, which serves as a sufficient source for Muslims, contains rulings on every domain of life. While acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage are explicitly commanded in the Quran, there is no command, recommendation, or indication whatsoever regarding male child circumcision. This silence is not coincidental; rather, it reflects a meaningful choice. While the Quran invites believers to follow only God's rulings, it explicitly criticizes blind adherence to human traditions, cultural norms, and practices inherited from ancestors:

> "Do they desire the judgment of ignorance? But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who are certain?" (Al-Ma'ida, 50)

This verse makes clear that practices rooted in history and culture must be reassessed through the Quran's guidance when they lack any scriptural basis.

The Historical and Cultural Origins of Circumcision

The practice of circumcision was widespread throughout the Middle East long before Islam. With a history of approximately seven thousand years, it was performed on both males and females in ancient Egypt, among Jewish communities, and in pre-Islamic Arab societies. In many pre-Islamic Arab tribes, circumcision functioned as a marker of social identity and communal belonging. At the time the Quran was revealed, this practice already existed as an established cultural norm. The Quran was revealed to purify believers from such *jahiliyya* traditions — not to endorse the existing cultural framework, but to transform it. In this context, characterizing circumcision as "an Islamic practice" stems from a misreading of both history and the Quran's message.

An-Nisa 119 and the Question of "Altering God's Creation"

The Quran recounts one of the harmful promises Satan makes to humanity:

> "And I will mislead them, and I will arouse in them desires, and I will command them so they will slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them so they will change the creation of Allah." (An-Nisa, 119)

Traditional exegesis has used this verse as evidence for the prohibition of cosmetic surgery. Yet the same circles that oppose cosmetic surgery on these grounds continue to defend male child circumcision — a profound inconsistency. Consider:

- In cosmetic surgery, the functional structure of the organ is preserved; only its form is altered.

- Circumcision, by contrast, permanently alters the anatomical structure of the male reproductive organ and may lead to sexual dysfunction, as documented in medical literature.

This contradiction reveals that the verse is being interpreted selectively, driven by a desire to preserve cultural habits. A consistent, Quran-centered reading necessitates that circumcision be evaluated within the scope of this verse.

Human Dignity and the Principle of Consent: The Quran's Approach

The Quran defines the human being as God's vicegerent on earth and as a dignified creature. The human body is a trust (amana), and respecting this trust is a religious obligation. Performing a permanent, irreversible surgical procedure on a child who lacks the capacity to consent, without any medical necessity, directly contradicts this principle. The Quran takes a firm stance against injustice and wrongdoing. A permanent intervention in someone's body without their consent is incompatible with the Quran's foundational moral principles. Viewed from this perspective, child circumcision deserves to be treated not merely as a cultural practice, but as an ethical issue as well.

Circumcision from a Medical Standpoint: Uncertain Benefits, Concrete Risks

Modern medical literature presents contested and largely context-dependent findings on circumcision.

The positions of international medical authorities can be summarized as follows:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), in its 2012 report, acknowledged some potential benefits of circumcision, but explicitly emphasized that these benefits are not strong enough to justify routine circumcision of newborns.

- The European Society for Paediatric Urology is explicitly opposed to routine circumcision.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends circumcision only for specific regions in Africa where HIV prevalence is high — a position that underscores that circumcision is not a universal medical necessity, but an exceptional measure tied to geographic and epidemiological conditions.

Possible complications include:

- Risk of infection and sepsis

- Excessive and uncontrollable bleeding

- Urethral stricture (meatal stenosis)

- Permanent deformity of the genital organ

- Sexual dysfunction developing during or after surgery

A surgical intervention performed without medical necessity contradicts the foundational principle of medical ethics: primum non nocere — first, do no harm.

Effects on Child Psychology

It must not be overlooked that circumcision is not merely a physical intervention, but one that can leave deep psychological marks. When performed in the newborn or early childhood period, this practice:

- Causes intense pain and fear,

- May undermine the child's fundamental sense of trust in their parents,

- Can generate feelings of abandonment and separation anxiety, particularly when performed without the mother's presence,

- Has been associated in long-term studies with PTSD-like symptoms, subconscious fears regarding bodily integrity, and self-esteem difficulties during sexual development.

Such an intervention on a child who lacks the capacity to consent violates their psychological safety and personal rights. The principle of the best interest of the child does not justify such practices in the absence of medical necessity.

An Assessment Within the Framework of Medical Ethics

Modern medical ethics is built on four foundational principles:

1. Autonomy — The individual's right to make decisions about their own body

2. Non-maleficence — Medical interventions must not cause harm

3. Beneficence — The intervention must provide a clear benefit to the individual

4. Justice — Equal and impartial treatment

Circumcision performed without medical necessity and without the individual's informed consent conflicts with the majority of these principles. With particular regard to the principle of autonomy: this intervention, carried out before the infant or young child has reached the maturity to decide about their own body, strips the individual of their future right to choose.

Conclusion

The fact that a practice has been a tradition for centuries does not prove that it is ethically sound. Throughout the history of medicine, many long-established practices have had to be abandoned in the light of scientific and ethical progress. A Quran-centered understanding of Islam takes God's rulings — not cultural traditions — as its foundation. Male child circumcision is a practice that is not commanded in the Quran, was inherited from pre-Islamic Middle Eastern cultures, and has for centuries been presented unquestioningly as a religious obligation. This practice is problematic on three fundamental levels:

Religiously: It has no basis in the Quran; on the contrary, it conflicts with verses that criticize the alteration of God's creation.

Medically: International medical authorities agree that routine circumcision is not a universal necessity; the concrete risks of the intervention outweigh its disputed benefits.

Ethically: A permanent surgical intervention performed on an individual incapable of consent is incompatible with the principles of autonomy and non-maleficence.

As Muslims, the primary responsibility is to take the Quran — not culture — as one's guide. Where the Quran is silent, the voice of culture must not be raised in its place. True submission is not submission to the traditions of one's ancestors, but to the Book of God.

> "Do they desire the judgment of ignorance? But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who are certain?" (Al-Ma'ida, 50)

Linguistic and Theological Analysis of the "We" Expression in the Quran

The Quran, beyond being a religious text, represents an unparalleled literary masterpiece standing at the pinnacle of Arabic literature. Every word of this book, which has guided the lives of billions since it was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad, carries profound meaning both linguistically and theologically. One expression that occasionally draws the attention of researchers and curious readers studying the Quran is the first-person plural pronoun "We" (in Arabic "Nahnu" / نحن), used when God speaks of Himself. This usage can create an impression of contradiction for those only superficially familiar with Islamic doctrine, which emphasizes monotheism. Yet this apparent contradiction resolves itself clearly and meaningfully once one becomes familiar with the nuances of language and the unique structure of Arabic. Here, the linguistic foundations, theological meaning, and relationship with Islam's doctrine of tawhid (divine unity) of the "We" expression used for God in the Quran will be examined comprehensively.

The Majestic Plural in Arabic: The Linguistic Origin of "Nahnu"

Language is not merely a tool of communication but also a carrier of culture, worldview, and social hierarchy. This reality is reflected in the ways different societies express greatness and dignity, giving rise to unique structures in languages.

This usage, known in Arabic grammar as "plural of magnificence" or "plural of majesty," is based on the principle of a singular entity referring to itself with a plural pronoun. In Western linguistics, this structure is called the "majestic plural" or *pluralis majestatis*. This usage is not unique to Arabic; on the contrary, it is a universal linguistic phenomenon adopted by many societies throughout human history. Indeed, in Latin, Roman Emperors used "nos" (we) instead of "ego" (I) in their edicts and official correspondence. In English, Queen Victoria's famous phrase "We are not amused" has gone down in history as a classic example of the monarchical plural. In Turkish as well, addressing a singular person with "siz" (you, plural/formal) instead of "sen" (you, informal) out of respect is the product of a similar linguistic mechanism. All these examples reflect a universal strategy that language has developed to express greatness and authority. It is clear that the "We" expression in the Quran must also be understood within this context.

The Linguistic Environment of the Quran's Revelation and the Nature of Arabic

The Quran's revelation in Arabic was not an incidental choice. The Almighty God, in targeting the Arab society as the primary audience of the revelation, adopted a language that spoke to their conceptual world, linguistic habits, and literary sensibilities. In 7th-century Arabia, poetry and oratory were highly developed; Arabs attached great importance to linguistic nuances and measured a text's value by its literary power. In this environment, the use of the majestic plural functioned as the most effective means of evoking the greatness of divine power in the listener's mind. The verse that emphasizes this aspect of the Quran states:

> "Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you might understand." (Yusuf, 12:2)

This statement clearly demonstrates that the choice of language was conscious and purposeful. Arabic, with its depth of meaning, phonetic harmony, and morphological richness, is the language best capable of conveying the divine message in its most powerful form. The fact that this language contains the majestic plural makes its use in revelation natural and meaningful.

The Contexts in Which "We" Is Used in the Quran

Looking at the Quran as a whole, it becomes apparent that the expression "We" is used with a certain consistency. Generally speaking, this usage is associated with acts that highlight God's greatness and power — such as creation, revelation, protection, and governance.

In the Context of Creation and Human Dignity:

> "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay." (Al-Mu'minun, 23:12)

In this verse, the expression "We" emphasizes the greatness of God's act of creation. The majesty of the process by which man is shaped from a humble substance — clay — by divine power is a universal truth made more powerfully felt through the plural expression. What is noteworthy here is the emphasis that the act of creation is carried out not merely as a physical act, but through a divine will bearing deep

meaning and purpose.

In the Context of the Preservation of Revelation:

> "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Al-Hijr, 15:9)

This verse reveals the divine will behind the sending down and preservation of the Quran. The use of "We" in this context powerfully expresses that these acts belong to God alone, and that no partner or intermediary is involved. The verse also has a historical dimension: the Quran has been preserved in its original form since the day it was revealed — a fact that can be seen as a concrete confirmation of the promise made in this verse.

Further Examples:

> "Indeed, We have granted you al-Kawthar." (Al-Kawthar, 108:1)

> "Indeed, it is We who give life to the dead." (Ya-Sin, 36:12)

In all of these examples, the expression "We" is seen to correspond with declarations relating to God's unique domains of power and authority. This consistency confirms that the usage is a linguistically and theologically deliberate choice.

The Harmony Between the Doctrine of Tawhid and the "We" Expression

Tawhid — the oneness and uniqueness of God — is the central principle that forms the spirit and backbone of the Quran. This principle is repeatedly emphasized throughout the Quran, and no expression is allowed to undermine God's oneness.

> "And your God is one God. There is no deity except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful." (Al-Baqarah, 2:163)

> "Say: He is Allah, Ahad." (Al-Ikhlas, 112:1)

These two verses express a fundamental truth that complements one another: God is one, and this oneness is both numerical and qualitative uniqueness. The choice of the word "Ahad" is particularly meaningful; for unlike "wahid" (one), this word expresses absolute and infinite singularity — a complete and perfect unity that exists without relation to any other number. Within this framework, the answer to the question of whether the "We" expression undermines the doctrine of tawhid is clear: In the Quran, the pronouns "you" (second-person plural) or "they" (third-person plural) are never used for God. That is, this "We" does not carry a plurality observed or spoken of from the outside, but rather an internal emphasis on majesty through which the speaker expresses His own greatness.

The Combined Use of "We" and "I"

One indicator of the linguistic richness of the Quran is the use of both "I" (Ana / إنني) and "We" within the same text. This should be understood not as a contradiction, but as a reflection of the flexible and layered nature of language.

> "Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me." (Ta-Ha, 20:14)

In this verse, the singular first person is used, reflecting a more intimate and direct context in which God communicates and addresses the individual directly. The first-person singular ("I") is generally preferred in verses that highlight God's direct connection with humanity and the relationship of worship and servitude. The "We" expression, by contrast, comes to the fore in contexts describing great divine acts — such as creation and revelation — that concern the universal order. The transition between these two usages demonstrates that language is employed intentionally and consciously, with layers of meaning carefully calibrated.

A Comparative Perspective: Plural Usage in Other Sacred Texts

This linguistic feature, which may appear unique to the Quran, is in fact a phenomenon encountered in other sacred texts as well. In the Hebrew Torah and various sections of the Old Testament, similar plural expressions are also used for God. The expression in Genesis 1:26 is a classic example. In the Jewish tradition of biblical interpretation, this plural has been accepted as a majestic plural expressing the greatness of God. This comparison reveals that the linguistic structure in question is a deep-rooted and universal phenomenon. The Quran has continued it in perfect harmony with Islam's doctrine of tawhid.

The Reflection of Divine Majesty in the Depths of Language

The expression "We" used for God in the Quran is neither a sign of multiplicity nor a contradiction. It represents a conscious narrative choice — one of the most effective ways to express magnificence and sublimity — rooted in the deep linguistic tradition of Arabic. Just as no one asks "Is there more than one ruler?" when a monarch declares "We command" in a royal edict, this expression in the Quran carries a perfectly clear meaning when read within its linguistic context. Evaluated from a theological perspective, it becomes apparent that the "We" expression is, far from undermining God's oneness, an instrument that expresses His greatness and power in the most forceful way possible. The Quran, within the same text, both proclaims God's oneness in unequivocal terms and employs the majestic plural to convey His sublimity. These two truths are complementary in nature.

Riba: The Foundation of Justice in Islamic Economics and the Limits of Unjust Gain

Islam does not view economic life merely as an arena for material profit; rather, it treats it as a system in which justice, honesty, and social solidarity are expressed. One of the fundamental principles of this system is the encouragement of lawful earnings and the prohibition of unjust gain. This is where "riba" — one of the most debated concepts in Islamic law — comes into focus. Although riba has frequently been equated with interest in traditional Islamic literature, this narrow definition fails to capture the concept's true scope. When its etymological roots and Qur'anic context are considered, riba encompasses not only financial interest but a broad framework that includes every form of unjust increase, unfair gain, and exploitative mechanism in economic relations.

The Etymological and Conceptual Dimensions of Riba

The word riba derives from the Arabic root "الرِّبٰوا" (ribā) and its basic meaning is "to increase, multiply, or grow." In classical Arabic, the word was used to express any situation involving increase or surplus. In Islamic terminology, however, riba refers not to mere increase but specifically to unjust and inequitable increase. An important distinction must be noted here: not every increase is riba, but every riba is an increase. The core philosophy of Islamic economics does not question increase itself, but rather the manner in which that increase is obtained. While earnings derived through labor, risk, and legitimate trade are encouraged in Islam, guaranteed increases that involve no labor, no risk, and that feed on the vulnerability of the debtor are strictly prohibited.

Riba and Interest: A Difference in Scope

One debate that has persisted among Islamic scholars for centuries concerns the relationship between riba and interest. Many classical commentators and jurists have interpreted riba in practice as being limited to interest. However, this approach does not fully reflect the Qur'anic usage of the term or its broad semantic range. In the Qur'an, rather than using the direct word for "interest" (Arabic: فَيْض — fayḍ, meaning "surplus, excess, to overflow"), the broader term "riba" is preferred. This choice is not coincidental and carries an important message: God intended to prohibit not merely a specific type of financial transaction but all forms of unjust gain. Had only modern-style interest been meant, the Qur'an could have used a more specific term. The selection of the word riba indicates that what is prohibited is not merely a particular rate or transaction type, but the entirety of unjust economic relations.

The Prohibition of Riba in the Qur'an

The prohibition of riba is emphasized in the Qur'an in a gradual and increasingly forceful manner. The clearest and most comprehensive ruling on this matter appears in verse 275 of Surah Al-Baqarah:

> "Those who consume riba will not stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, 'Trade is just like riba.' But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden riba. Whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns — those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally." (Al-Baqarah, 2:275)

This verse emphasizes several critical points:

1. The distinction between riba and trade: Some attempted to equate the two by saying "trade is just like riba." Yet Allah explicitly rejects this view, declaring trade permissible and riba forbidden.

2. The spiritual dimension: The image of riba consumers rising "like one beaten by Satan into insanity" shows that this act constitutes not merely an economic wrong but a profound moral and spiritual corruption.

3. An absolute prohibition: The promise of eternal punishment in the hereafter for those who continue with riba after receiving admonition demonstrates the gravity of the prohibition.

What is particularly striking in this verse is the emphasis that riba is *not* like trade. Trade involves mutual consent, risk-sharing, and labor; riba, by contrast, is built on one-sided gain, guaranteed return, and exploitation of the debtor's vulnerability.

The Broad Scope of Riba: Beyond Interest

Limiting riba solely to interest prevents a true understanding of its place in Islamic economic philosophy. Riba is a broad concept encompassing the following:

1. Classical Interest Transactions

Demanding a predetermined, guaranteed surplus in exchange for a loan of money or goods. For example:

- Lending 100,000 TL and receiving 110,000 TL back after one year

- Lending 100 grams of gold and demanding 110 grams back after six months

The common features of such transactions:

- A debt relationship exists

- The gain is guaranteed in advance

- There is no risk

- There is no labor

2. Usury

Demanding exorbitant interest rates by exploiting people's financial distress, urgent needs, or lack of knowledge. Usury is one of the most exploitative forms of riba because it:

- Exploits the desperation of the borrower

- Deepens social injustice

- Perpetuates economic inequality

- Causes harm to the social fabric

3. Unjust Seizure Practices

Seizing property worth far more than the outstanding debt when a borrower cannot repay. For example:

- Seizing a house worth 200,000 TL for a debt of 50,000 TL

- Taking away all of a person's means of livelihood over a small debt

Such practices go beyond the legitimate right of the creditor and turn into exploitation, falling within the scope of riba.

4. Deceptive Trade Practices

Actions such as exchanging non-equivalent goods as though they were equivalent, concealing the true value of goods, or cheating in weights and measures. Because these actions generate unjust gain directly, they fall within the scope of riba.

5. Every Form of Guaranteed Surplus Arising from Debt

Many instruments in the modern financial system, even when presented under different names, essentially contain guaranteed returns on debt and therefore fall within the scope of riba:

- Late payment interest

- Early repayment penalties (where unjust)

- Multiplication of the principal in debt restructuring

Non-Riba Earnings: Trade and Investment

One of the foundational principles of Islamic economics is the encouragement of legitimate earnings. The prohibition of riba does not mean the cessation of economic activity; it means the establishment of a more just economic order. Lawful, non-riba forms of earning include:

1. Labor-Based Earnings

Any earnings that are the result of human labor are encouraged in Islam, encompassing both physical and intellectual effort. A worker's wages, a doctor's consultation fee, an architect's project fee — all such earnings are lawful and valuable because they are the product of labor.

2. Risk-Bearing Commercial Earnings

Earnings obtained through buying and selling, commerce, and entrepreneurship are not riba because they involve risk and are subject to market conditions. For example:

Trade in Goods: A merchant buys goods for 100,000 TL and sells them for 120,000 TL according to market conditions. This earning:

- Involves risk (the goods may not sell, or may lose value)

- Requires labor (from sourcing to sales)

- Depends on market conditions (is not guaranteed)

- Is based on mutual consent

3. Earnings from Value Changes: The Example of Gold and Foreign Currency

An important distinction must be clarified here: earnings from gold and foreign currency investments are not riba under certain conditions.

Earning from Gold

You buy gold for 100,000 TL. A year later the gold is worth 130,000 TL and you sell it, earning 30,000 TL. This earning is not riba. Because:

- There is no debt relationship: you did not lend money to anyone; you purchased a commodity

- There is risk: the value of gold may fall and you may incur a loss

- There is labor: gold is extracted from the earth, processed, and traded

- It is not guaranteed: the gain depends on market conditions

However, the following situations fall within the scope of riba:

- Lending gold and demanding more back (giving 100g and demanding 110g)

- Deferred gold exchanges (violation of the conditions of spot delivery and equivalence)

- Speculative transactions without physical delivery

Earning from Foreign Currency

The same logic applies to currency trading. The value of money changes according to the economic conditions of countries:

- The dollar may be strong against the TL while the Iranian rial is weak

- The euro may be strong against the dollar while the TL is weak

- These changes depend on market conditions, economic indicators, and supply and demand

Buying a currency and selling it when it has gained value is like trading a commodity and is not riba, because:

- It involves risk

- The possibility of loss exists

- There is no guaranteed return

- There is labor (in the printing, distribution, etc. of money)

The Essence of Riba: Four Fundamental Characteristics

To understand whether an economic transaction constitutes riba, four fundamental questions must be asked:

1. Is there labor? Does the transaction involve a productive activity, service, or effort? If the gain is entirely passive and automatic, the suspicion of riba is strong.

2. Is there risk? Is the gain certain, or does it depend on market conditions, success, or other uncertainties? A guaranteed gain is a marker of riba.

3. Is the gain guaranteed? Is there a predetermined, fixed surplus? Risk-free guaranteed return is the defining characteristic of riba.

4. Is the vulnerability of the debtor being exploited? Is the other party's need, ignorance, or desperation being converted into gain? This is the social injustice dimension of riba.

When several of these four elements are present together, the likelihood of a transaction being riba is high.

The Socioeconomic Effects of Riba

There are profound wisdoms behind the Qur'an's severe prohibition of riba. Riba is not merely an individual sin; it is a systemic problem that threatens the social fabric:

1. Deepens Economic Inequality: Riba ensures that the wealthy grow wealthier while the poor remain trapped in debt. Gain without labor or risk privileges those who hold capital while crushing those who provide labor.

2. Weakens the Productive Economy: Because money multiplies within the riba system without working or contributing to production, genuine economic activities are discouraged. People are directed toward seeking interest income rather than producing.

3. Disrupts Social Solidarity: Riba makes relations between people interest-driven. Since the lender profits from the borrower's hardship, exploitation replaces compassion and solidarity.

4. Threatens Social Peace: Individuals and families crushed under debt and suffocated by interest burdens become sources of social unrest. Economic injustice prepares the ground for social upheaval.

5. Leads to Moral Decline: The riba system normalizes and legitimizes moral failures such as "earning without working" and "benefiting from others' hardship."

The Alternative Model of Islamic Economics

The prohibition of riba is not intended to halt economic life but to establish a more just system. Islamic economics offers alternatives based on the following principles:

1. Profit-and-Loss Sharing (Mudaraba, Musharaka): The capital owner and the laborer share both profit and risk. Earnings are obtained based on the outcome of the venture rather than on a guaranteed return.

2. Qard al-Hasan (Benevolent Loan): An interest-free loan is extended to those in need. The lender expects reward from God, and social solidarity is strengthened.

3. Ijara (Leasing): The right to use an asset is rented, providing legitimate earnings in exchange for labor and service.

4. Murabaha (Cost-Plus): The seller discloses the cost and a reasonable profit; the buyer purchases with full knowledge. Transparency and honesty are paramount.

Riba Today: A Critique of the Modern Financial System

The contemporary capitalist financial system is built largely on riba. Central banks set interest rates, commercial banks add interest to loans, and individuals and governments are crushed under interest burdens. This system:

- Creates constant pressure for growth (in order to be able to pay interest)

- Leads to economic crises

- Intensifies income inequality

- Creates debt spirals

- Erodes moral values

Islamic economics emphasizes that the fundamental problem of this system is riba, and that eliminating riba is necessary for a sustainable and just economy.

Riba Is the Enemy of Economic Justice

Riba is not merely interest; every form of guaranteed gain that involves no labor, no risk, and that feeds on the vulnerability of the debtor falls within the scope of riba. The Qur'an's prohibition of riba is not intended to halt economic life but to establish justice.

Islamic economics:

- Encourages trade, prohibits riba

- Provides for risk-sharing, rejects guaranteed exploitation

- Exalts the value of labor, restricts passive gain

- Values social solidarity, restrains individual greed

Riba is not merely a technical prohibition; it is a moral call for an economic order built on justice, compassion, and responsibility. Ultimately, viewing riba within a narrow frame prevents an understanding of Islam's economic philosophy. Riba is a broad concept encompassing every form of unjust increase, unfair gain, and exploitative mechanism. Islam's goal is to establish an economic order in which justice, honesty, and mutual respect prevail among people — an order whose foundation is the encouragement of lawful earnings and the prohibition of all unjust gains, riba foremost among them.

The True Path to Paradise, Hell, and Salvation in Islam: Labor, Patience, and Submission

Islam demands deep inwardness, steadfast effort, and genuine submission from those seeking to draw closer to Allah and earn His pleasure. This journey can be completed neither through superficial rituals nor through the shortcuts offered by traditional complacency. Practices such as drinking Zamzam water, performing a few hours of worship on holy nights, receiving the blessing of a saint's prayer, or visiting certain sacred sites have come to be regarded by many as certificates of salvation. Yet the Quran directly and clearly rejects such easy-path approaches. The road to Allah's pleasure is woven from sincerity in the heart, truthfulness on the tongue, and deeds in the body — built with patience, labor, and devotion. This piece examines Islam's understanding of paradise and hell, the true conditions of salvation, the errors that traditional thinking brings, and the Quran's definitive rulings on these matters.

No Salvation Without Labor: The Message of Surah An-Najm

One of the most striking expressions in the Quran appears in verse 39 of Surah An-Najm: "And that there is not for man except that which he strives for." This verse forms the cornerstone of Islam's understanding of salvation. Everything a person attains is the return on their work, their effort, and the deeds they perform with sincerity. What carries weight before Allah is not performative worship or piety displayed for social approval, but the genuine submission that flows from the heart and permeates one's life. Evaluated within this principle, it becomes clear that any understanding promising "salvation in a single night" runs contrary to the spirit of the Quran. Faith is not a ritual accomplished in an instant; it is a state and a way of life sustained throughout a lifetime. A person proves their faith not merely by declaring it with words, but by reflecting it in their daily life, their character, their relationships, and their contribution to society.

Traditional Complacency and the Quran's Warnings

In popular religious understanding, a deeply rooted error sometimes takes hold: performing certain rituals, visiting sacred sites, or reciting special prayers is presented as sufficient condition for reaching paradise. This understanding feeds the human tendency to seek the easy path and stands in the way of genuine striving in faith. Yet verse 214 of Surah Al-Baqarah is a direct answer to this error: "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such trial has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until the messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When is the help of Allah?' Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near." This verse is unmistakably clear: Paradise is not a place to be earned without experiencing hardship, without being shaken, and without persevering. All believers throughout history have passed through this process. It is therefore a serious error for today's believers to suppose they are exempt from this universal law.

Similarly, verse 142 of Surah Āl-Imrān reinforces this truth: "Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet made evident those among you who strive

and made evident those who are steadfast?" The concept of striving here encompasses not only armed struggle but also reckoning with the ego, resisting poor character, and advancing on the right path with patience and resolve. Allah does not reward a servant without testing them; He reveals their resilience and sincerity by putting them through trial.

Holy Water and the True Place of Ritual

Zamzam water holds a special significance in Islamic history. However, the meaning attributed to it has, over time, transformed it into something approaching a magical instrument of purification. Many people carry a deep conviction that Zamzam water erases sins or guarantees entry into paradise. This understanding is incompatible with the principles of Islam. A water, a place, or a night — none of these suffice to earn Allah's pleasure. For what carries weight before Allah is the sincerity of the servant's intention, the truthfulness they live by, and their patience in the face of hardship. The entirety of the Quran carries this message: form is unimportant — substance is what matters.

Said Nursi's Warning: Paradise Is Not Cheap

A well-known observation by Said Nursi encapsulates this matter: "Time has shown: Paradise is not cheap, and Hell is not pointless either." These words express two fundamental truths simultaneously. First, paradise is not free — it requires labor, patience, and sincerity. Second, hell is not meaningless — every evil and every denial finds its recompense. This profound insight directs serious criticism at contemporary popular religious understanding. Against the mindset that believes a few prayers recited on a holy night will erase all sins, or that reciting a special set of prayers guarantees salvation, Nursi's words stand as a powerful warning.

The Eternity of Paradise and Hell: The Quran's Definitive Ruling

According to Islamic belief, paradise and hell are two permanent realms that begin after the end of earthly life and continue forever. The Quran is extremely clear and unambiguous on this point. Nevertheless, in certain circles, views are expressed suggesting that "hell is temporary" or that "sinners will eventually emerge from hell." These views directly contradict the explicit texts of the Quran.

Verses 80 and 81 of Surah Al-Baqarah address this error head-on: "And they say, 'The Fire will not touch us except for a few days.' Say, 'Have you taken a promise from Allah? For Allah will never break His promise. Or do you say about Allah that which you do not know? Yes, whoever earns evil and his sin has encompassed him — those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally." This verse clearly refutes those who argue that hell will be temporary. The phrase "a few days" is characterized as empty wishful thinking about the fire's limited duration, and Allah issues a definitive ruling against this claim.

Verse 82 of the same surah is its mirror image: "And those who believe and do righteous deeds — those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally." Paradise, just like hell, is a permanent and everlasting abode. Those who

enter it do not depart after some time. This eternity is a manifestation of both Allah's justice and His mercy.

The Essence of Faith: Sincerity, Truthfulness, and Action

In Islam, faith has three dimensions: sincerity in the heart, truthfulness on the tongue, and action in the body. These three elements complete one another, and the absence of any one of them damages the others. If a person says "I believe" only with their tongue while not feeling it in their heart, or if they believe in their heart without reflecting it in their life, faith has not been made whole. Verse 162 of Surah Al-An'am expresses this wholeness perfectly: "Say: Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds." This verse reveals that Islam is not merely a collection of rituals; on the contrary, it requires a consciousness and resolve through which a person dedicates their entire being, their life and their death, to Allah. Performing the prayer is worship — and so is conducting an honest professional life. Treating one's family well is worship. Remaining patient in the face of hardship is worship. As a religion that encompasses all of life, Islam demands this wholeness.

The Path of True Salvation

The way out of the complacency trap brought by traditional thinking lies in reading the Quran's message directly and courageously. The Quran says to the person: Paradise is not a place reached easily — but this difficulty is not to frighten you, it is to mature you and to reveal the true worth of a sincere believer. Hell, too, is not a place of meaningless torment; on the contrary, it is an expression of Allah's justice and the moral balance of the universe.

Drinking holy water, performing worship on sacred nights, reciting special prayer sets — none of these alone suffices to earn Allah's pleasure. What is essential is the heart's complete submission to Allah. What is essential is to keep faith alive by standing firm against hardship. What is essential is to reach a consciousness of living one's life for Allah and dedicating oneself to Him.

As Said Nursi said — paradise is not cheap. But Allah's mercy is boundless, and every step taken with a sincere heart and genuine effort draws one a little closer to that mercy. This is the greatest glad tiding Islam offers humanity: labor and sincerity are never wasted; Allah never leaves the journey of His sincere servants unrewarded.

From Darkness to Light: The Spiritual Journey of Turning to Allah

From the moment a person enters this world, they embark on a journey between two opposite poles: darkness and light. This journey is not merely an external struggle — it is also a profound inner reckoning. Sometimes an inner emptiness, sometimes external hardships, sometimes the mistakes we commit drag a person into the depths of a dark well. These darknesses can be so dense that one feels there is no way out. Yet the Quran always offers humanity a light against these darknesses. According to Islamic teaching, true salvation is possible not through a person's own strength, but only through Allah's mercy. Allah is the Supreme Being who created

humanity, who knows it, and who is nearest to it. Turning to Him is the only true path out of darkness. Here, in the light of Quranic verses, we will examine the spiritual dimensions of the passage from darkness to light and explore the transformative power of turning to Allah in human life.

The Wisdom of Trial: Making Sense of Darkness

Every person feels, at least once in their life, as though they are at the bottom of a deep well. So where do these darknesses come from? The Quran defines life's difficulties and hardships not as punishment, but as a trial. Allah sometimes tests the servants He loves with hardship; this trial carries a divine wisdom — to mature the human soul and draw it ever closer to Allah. A person who has never experienced darkness cannot truly grasp the value of light. A heart that has not tasted pain cannot reach the depth of gratitude. For someone who does not know winter, the promise of spring holds no meaning. This is precisely why Allah sometimes leaves His servants in deep silence, under a heavy burden, with seemingly unsolvable problems. This is not abandonment — it is an invitation, a call. The servant is being asked: "In this darkness, to whom will you turn?" One who does not know the darkness of polytheism cannot know the value of light either. Hardship is one of the most powerful means by which a person is drawn closer to Allah. The person at the bottom of the well must look upward — and up there, there is only Allah.

The Invocation of Mesengger Yunus: Calling Out from Within the Darknesses

The most striking metaphor of darkness presented to us in the Quran is the experience of Mesengger Yunus. In Surah Al-Anbiya, this story is related as follows:

"And Dhul-Nun, when he went away in anger, thinking We would never have power over him. Then he called out in the darknesses: 'There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.'" (Al-Anbiya, 87)

What is striking in this verse is the terror of the conditions Mesengger Yunus found himself in. He is in the middle of the sea, in the belly of a whale, in the depths of the water — in other words, he is in a complete darkness both physically and spiritually. Moreover, he fell into this darkness by his own choice; he had decided to flee his mission and departed without awaiting Allah's permission. Yet what does he do? He sets his pride aside, acknowledges his mistake, and turns directly to Allah. In saying "There is no deity except You," he reaffirms Tawhid. In saying "Exalted are You," he acknowledges Allah's majesty and his own helplessness. And in saying "Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers," he openly confesses his error. These three elements — Tawhid, glorification, and confession — are the essence of turning to Allah. This invocation rising from within the darknesses set divine mercy in motion, and Prophet Yunus was saved. The message this story gives us is clear: No matter how deep a darkness one has fallen into, a sincere turning to Allah opens the door to salvation.

Holding Fast to Allah's Rope: Holding On So as Not to Be Lost

In a dark environment, one needs a guide, a light, a firm point to hold on to in order not to lose one's way. The Quran describes this point of holding on with great clarity.

In Surah Al Imran it is commanded:

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." (Al Imran, 103)

The expression "the rope of Allah" is one of the most powerful metaphors offered by the Quran. To pull someone out of a well, a rope is needed. This rope must be extended from the outside, because the person inside the well cannot pull themselves out. Allah's rope is the symbol of precisely this divine intervention. To hold fast to that rope means to place His guidance, His revelation, and His grace at the center of life. The same call is repeated in Surah Al-Hajj:

"And hold fast to Allah." (Al-Hajj, 78)

This is a profound command. The word "hold fast" signifies not merely an intellectual acceptance, but the complete surrender of heart and body — like a child clinging to its mother, with complete trust, complete submission. When the burdens of the world crush one's shoulders, the most powerful thing a person can do is to cling tightly to Allah. This clinging ensures that one does not get lost in the darkness.

Migration to Allah: The Depth of Change

The concept of migration (hijra) holds great importance in Islamic history, yet in its essence it is not merely a physical relocation. The Quran also defines migration as the turning of the heart and intention toward Allah. In Surah Adh-Dhariyat, this call is expressed very clearly:

"So flee to Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner." (Adh-Dhariyat, 50)

Turning to Allah means loosening one's attachments to the world, purifying the heart from material concerns, and realizing that true peace is found only in Allah. This is not a separation — it is a reunion. It is the person's return to their true origin, their Creator, their Owner. In Surah Al-Ankabut, Mesengger Lut's decision is very meaningful in this context:

"So Lot believed him. Said, 'Indeed, I will emigrate to my Lord. Indeed, He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.'" (Al-Ankabut, 26)

These words of Mesengger Lut express not a departure from the corruption of the society around him, but a direct turning toward Allah. The sentence "I will emigrate to my Lord" is the declaration of that profound journey stretching from the world to Allah. This migration is not exclusive to Prophet Lut. Every person can make this decision in their own life — they can leave the darknesses behind and set out on the walk toward Allah.

The Mercy of the Most Merciful: No Room for Despair

One of the greatest reasons a person falls into darkness is the remorse experienced following sins and mistakes, and the inability to forgive oneself. Sometimes a person is so crushed under the weight of the mistakes they have made that they believe they are not worthy of Allah's forgiveness. This feeling pushes them into an even deeper

darkness. However, the Quran firmly opposes this notion. In Surah Az-Zumar, Allah commands:

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'" (Az-Zumar, 53)

This verse is one of the most hope-giving verses in the Quran. The expression "those who have transgressed against themselves" describes people who have committed great sins, exceeded boundaries, and harmed themselves. In other words, this verse addresses precisely those who are at their darkest point. And what is said to those people is this: Do not lose hope in Allah's mercy. Allah's forgiveness is boundless. It is He who creates spring in the heart of winter; He who brings green shoots out of frozen soil, who can make a tree that appears dead blossom again. No matter how far a person has fallen, Allah can always give them hope again and rebuild them anew. To surrender to despair is to belittle Allah's infinite mercy. Therefore, even while in the midst of darkness, hope is one of the most powerful weapons.

The Road Stretching from Darkness to Light

Human life consists of this profound journey between darkness and light. Darknesses are inevitable — but remaining in darkness is not obligatory. The Quran reminds us of this truth repeatedly and in different ways: the path out of darknesses passes through turning to Allah. This turning has a few essential elements. First, Tawhid — accepting from the heart the oneness and majesty of Allah, and realizing that all things come from Him and return to Him. Then, surrender — acknowledging the limits of one's own power and holding fast to Allah's rope. Third, migration — withdrawing from the world in heart and drawing near to Allah, directing one's intention and orientation toward Him. And finally, hope — trusting in Allah's infinite mercy and never losing hope in His forgiveness. When Mesengger Yunus called out from within the darknesses, he was saved. When Mesengger Lut decided to migrate to Allah, he found strength. On every page, in every verse of the Quran, this call is repeated: When you are lost in darkness, run to Allah. Cling to Him. Turn to Him. For He is the Light of lights, and whoever draws near to Him never remains in darkness. The person who sheds the burdens of the world and migrates to their Lord finds peace. Even at the bottom of a well, the servant who calls upon Allah is saved — for He is nearer to His servant than the jugular vein, and no darkness can extinguish His light.

Allah's Blessings, Sustenance, and Gratitude

One of the most profound perspectives Islam offers humanity concerns the question of who truly owns existence. The answer to this question is not merely a matter of belief; it is a matter of consciousness that transforms daily life, human relationships, and one's inner world from the ground up. To instill this consciousness, Islam presents numerous parables, stories, and verses in the Quran. Chief among them is the concept of rizq (sustenance). In common usage, rizq is often understood narrowly — equated with earning a living or material gain. Yet from an Islamic perspective, rizq encompasses every form of goodness, blessing, and grace that

Allah bestows upon a person throughout their life. A morsel of bread is rizq; so is a healthy breath. Knowledge is rizq; so is a loving family. The Arabic word rizq literally means "gift, bounty, and provision." In Islamic literature, it refers to every means Allah provides to every living being to sustain its life — and these means are not only physical. Spiritual sustenance is equally an inseparable part of the concept.

Many people tend to view the effort they exert and the time they invest in earning a livelihood as the ultimate cause of what they receive. While this may seem reasonable on the surface, it is inconsistent with Islam's understanding of rizq. A person can only act within the framework of causes that Allah has created — and those causes themselves were created by Allah. Therefore, human effort may be a means to rizq, but it can never be its true source. The true source is Allah alone.

To illustrate this, consider the following thought experiment: A person sits down to breakfast and looks at the bread, olives, and cheese on the table. Who prepared them? Perhaps a mother. Who bought the ingredients? Perhaps a father who worked and earned money. But who created the wheat that made the bread? Who made the soil, the rain, the sun? Tracing the questions backward, we inevitably arrive at a single point: Allah. This is precisely where the depth of the concept of rizq begins. Everything on the table is the work of an unseen power behind a visible reality.

The Story of Mary: A Mirror Revealing the Source of Sustenance

Verse 37 of Surah Al Imran presents this profound understanding of *rizq* in a remarkably striking way:

"Her Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner, and gave her into the care of Zechariah. Whenever Zechariah entered upon her in the sanctuary, he found with her provision. He said, 'O Mary, from where is this for you?' She said, 'It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.'"

The first thing to note in this verse is that sustenance arrives unexpectedly, beyond ordinary causes. Mary is in a sanctuary, engaged in worship. She has not gone to a market, nor has she asked anyone for food. Yet provision is with her. Zechariah was astonished and asked about its source. Mary's reply summarizes the essence of Islam's understanding of rizq in a single sentence: "It is from Allah."

This answer is not a simple transfer of information. It is an expression of deep surrender, a well-rooted consciousness of divine unity, and a matured faith. Mary is not reporting where the food physically came from — she is declaring who gave it. This distinction is crucial. Islam's understanding of rizq does not deny physical causes; rather, it emphasizes that beyond those causes, the true will and power belong to Allah.

Some classical commentators have suggested that the food described in this verse was sent down from the heavens. Yet what the verse truly emphasizes is not *how* the provision came, but who sent it. Whether the food descended from the sky or arrived through the hands of a neighbor, Mary's answer would have been unchanged:

"It is from Allah." This is the very essence of the correct consciousness regarding rizq.

The Role of Causes: Tool or Source?

Islam's understanding of rizq does not dismiss causes entirely. On the contrary, Allah created the world of causes and has made it incumbent upon human beings to act within them. Working, producing, and exerting effort are all part of this chain of causes. However, there is a fine line to be mindful of: mistaking the means for the source leads to a mental and spiritual error.

A farmer sows seeds, waters them, and toils to fertilize the soil. But who provides the mysterious life energy within the earth that causes the seed to sprout? Who makes the sun rise? Who sends the rain? Who places within the seed the power to germinate? No matter how hard a person works, they cannot answer these questions — because all these forces operate by Allah's creation and permission.

A person who grasps this truth does not abandon effort; rather, they work while relying on Allah and placing their trust in Him. While earning their rizq, they do not forget who the true provider is. This consciousness protects a person from arrogance — for instead of saying "I earned this, I succeeded," they say "Allah granted it, Allah made it easy." This opens the door to both gratitude and humility.

In the Light of Surah Ash-Shu'ara: "It Is He Who Feeds Me and Gives Me Drink"

Verse 79 of Surah Ash-Shu'ara conveys the following words on the tongue of the Prophet Ibrahim:

"And it is He who feeds me and gives me drink."

This verse affirms, from a different perspective, the same truth as the story of Mary. The Prophet Ibrahim is a great prophet with an exceptionally strong consciousness of divine unity. He therefore sees Allah alone as the one who provides his sustenance, and he states this openly. Notably, the verse uses a direct form — "it is He who feeds me" — indicating that the giving of sustenance belongs directly to Allah, while intermediaries serve only as instruments in the process. The meal a mother prepares, the money a father earns, the product a manufacturer makes — all are ultimately manifestations of a cause decreed by Allah.

This verse also makes clear to whom gratitude should be directed. A grateful person should direct their gratitude not only to the one who prepared the food, but above all to Allah who brought that food into existence. Thanking people is also a duty — but the primary gratitude, as a requirement of faith, must be to Allah.

The Effect of the Concept of Rizq on the Consciousness of Gratitude

Gratitude holds a central place in Islam's moral understanding. Dozens of Quranic verses command gratitude, and it is declared that gratitude brings increase while ingratitude brings loss. Verse 7 of Surah Ibrahim states:

"And when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you in favor.

But if you are ungrateful, indeed My punishment is severe.'"

For this divine promise to be fulfilled in life, one must first be aware of who has given the blessing. If a person believes their rizq is merely the product of their own work or luck, they direct their gratitude either to themselves or to "chance" — and in that case, true gratitude never takes place. But when a person understands that rizq comes from Allah, they turn to Him in every morsel, every breath, every day of peace — and they are truly grateful.

This gratitude is not merely a verbal expression of thanks; it also means using blessings appropriately, avoiding waste, and abiding by the commands and prohibitions of Allah who bestowed the blessing. Mary's attitude here too is an exemplary model. When she sees the provision in her sanctuary, she neither marvels with pride nor becomes heedless; she turns directly to Allah and affirms that the sustenance is from Him. This is consciousness in its purest form — recognizing the owner of a blessing when it arrives and turning to Him.

Rizq Is Not Only Material

To limit rizq to food and drink is to narrow the concept considerably. Islam's understanding of rizq encompasses a far broader perspective:

Health and well-being are a great form of rizq. A person understands the value of health when they fall ill — but Islam's teachings aim to bring a person to this awareness before illness strikes.

Knowledge and wisdom are also rizq. Allah grants understanding, comprehension, and knowledge to whomever He wills. This is a far more lasting and precious blessing than material provision.

Security and peace of mind are rizq. Feeling safe within one's community, being able to sleep at night, waking up in the morning with hope — all of these are gifts from Allah.

Family and love are rizq. A loving spouse, a compassionate mother, a trustworthy friend — these are blessings that cannot be measured in material terms, yet they are among life's most precious treasures.

Faith and spirituality are among the greatest forms of rizq. A person's belief in Allah, their knowledge of Him, the peace they find in prayer, the comfort they receive in supplication — these are divine generosities given without account.

With all these dimensions, the concept of rizq creates a consciousness of Allah that permeates every moment of life. A person comes to realize they are receiving rizq not only in their meals but also when they wake each morning, when they hear a kind word from a friend, when they are moved by something beautiful, or when they find a way out of difficulty.

Seeing Allah in Every Blessing

Islam's understanding of rizq is an invitation to profound awareness — the

awareness of seeing Allah's will, power, and mercy behind every blessing. It means knowing that the bread on the table is given by Allah, but equally recognizing the air we breathe, the steps we take, and the colors we see as gifts from Him.

The story of Mary is the simplest and most powerful expression of this consciousness. The sentence "It is from Allah" is not merely an answer identifying the origin of some food — it is an affirmation of divine unity reminding us of who owns everything. The words of Ibrahim, "It is He who feeds me and gives me drink," demonstrate how this consciousness was lived by a great prophet.

A person who internalizes this understanding is transformed — both in how they earn their rizq, in how they consume it, and in how they give thanks for it. They embrace effort but do not worship effort. They look at causes but see beyond them. They use blessings but never forget the One who bestows them. And ultimately, by giving thanks to Allah in every moment of life, they live a deeper, more peaceful, and more meaningful existence.

Shirk, Mushrik, and Islamic Law of War in the Light of Surah At-Tawbah

One of the most fundamental concepts in Islam, the matter of shirk (polytheism) and the mushrik (polytheist), is not merely a subject of theological debate — it is a matter that has produced practical political and social consequences and shaped the course of history. The opening verses of Surah At-Tawbah in particular rank among the most debated and often most misunderstood passages in the context of Islamic law of war. This article examines the proper framework for understanding the concepts of shirk and mushrik, the trajectory of the historical relationship between Muslims and polytheists, and how the relevant verses of Surah At-Tawbah should be evaluated in both their historical and theological context.

Understanding the Concepts of Shirk and Mushrik Correctly

Shirk is not a narrow concept synonymous solely with idol worship in Islamic creed; on the contrary, it carries a far broader meaning. Rooted in the sense of "associating a partner," the term refers to equating any being, value, or authority with God. This equation may manifest in the form of a concrete idol, but it can equally take the shape of a desire, a power, or a worldly blessing placed ahead of God's pleasure. The understanding of shirk is therefore directly connected not only to outward acts of worship but to the hierarchy of priorities within a person's inner world.

When we consider this broad definition, the philosophical rationale behind shirk being regarded as the gravest spiritual offense in Islam becomes clearer. The belief in tawhid — holding God's oneness above all else — is the cornerstone of Islam's entire moral and legal structure. The mushrik is the person who violates this oneness by associating partners with God. Yet it must be emphasized from the outset that this definition does not automatically imply enmity or grounds for warfare. Islamic history has indeed witnessed long periods during which Muslims coexisted peacefully with polytheists.

Surah At-Tawbah is notable for being the only surah in the Quran that does not begin

with the basmala. The first verse is a declaration of "bara'ah" — a severing of ties — issued by God and His Messenger toward the polytheists who violated their treaties. The second verse reveals that this severance is not instantaneous but is spread over a four-month period. This four-month window is not a sudden declaration of war but a reasonable and just interval granted to the other party to reposition itself. It is implied that even those who broke the treaty could still adopt a peaceful stance within this period, and that the path to return had not yet closed. This approach is in complete harmony with the foundational principle of Islamic law: "No sanction without prior warning."

The Third Verse: Keeping the Door of Repentance Open

The third verse conveys the divine proclamation to be announced at the great pilgrimage gathering in Mecca. Although this proclamation contains a stern threat of punishment, it simultaneously extends a powerful invitation to repentance: "But if you repent, it is better for you." In other words, even at this critical threshold, Islam had not fully closed its face — a door remained open for those who wished to return. The announcement of punishment should be read not as a deliberate provocation but as a reminder of the natural consequences of one's actions. Throughout the Quran, such expressions are generally aimed not at frightening people but at confronting them with their own responsibility.

The Fourth Verse: A Guarantee for Faithful Polytheists

The fourth verse of Surah At-Tawbah raises a distinction of great political and moral significance. It states that treaties made with polytheists who remained faithful to their agreements and showed no hostile attitude toward Muslims retained their validity until the agreed term was fulfilled. This verse makes it unequivocally clear that Islam does not target a community or individual on the grounds of a mere difference in belief or faith. The justification for war is not unbelief but treachery, injustice, and aggression. This subtle yet decisive distinction is the most critical point overlooked by those who misread Surah At-Tawbah.

The Fifth Verse: The "Sword Verse" in Historical Context

The fifth verse contains the passage known as the "sword verse," frequently instrumentalized in anti-Islamic discourse: "When the sacred months have passed, kill the polytheists wherever you find them." Extracted from its context, this statement can appear to be an extremely harsh and universally applicable command of aggression. However, such a reading contains serious errors both linguistically and historically.

First and foremost, the "polytheists" addressed in the verse do not encompass all mushrikeen. As is clearly understood from the fourth verse, those who remained faithful to their treaties are excluded from this group. The addressees here are the groups that had openly violated the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, launched armed attacks against Muslims, and threatened the security order. The phrase "wherever you find them" likewise points to a very specific situation: the expiration of an ultimatum period and an active state of war in force. This is not a permanent and universal rule

of law but a temporary war order directed at resolving a historical crisis.

Moreover, the very same verse immediately opens an exception: "But if they repent, perform the prayer, and give alms, let them go their way." The act, in other words, is deemed legitimate only against an armed enemy and only under conditions of ongoing conflict. Even here, Islam preserves the flexibility to allow the opposing party the possibility of return.

The Sixth Verse: The Pinnacle of Tolerance

The sixth verse, coming immediately after the fifth, contains one of the most striking regulations in the history of the law of war: "And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of God; then deliver him to his place of safety." This statement deserves careful reflection. The fifth verse describes what is virtually an armed combat environment. The sixth verse, which follows immediately, commands that even in such an environment, if someone from the enemy side requests sanctuary, security must be provided for that person. Furthermore, one is not merely obligated to protect him — delivering him safely to a secure area is made mandatory as well. This injunction is a principle that fundamentally distinguishes Islam's ethics of war from any ordinary understanding of conflict.

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:32: The Sanctity of Life

To correctly evaluate the relevant verses of Surah At-Tawbah, it is also necessary to consider the Quran's general perspective on human life. Verse 32 of Surah Al-Ma'idah expresses this general perspective in a remarkably powerful manner: "Whoever kills a soul — unless for a soul or for corruption done in the land — it is as if he had slain all of mankind." This verse reflects the value the Quran assigns to human life and constrains the domains in which war is permitted to an extremely narrow framework. Killing is deemed legitimate only for the purpose of protecting another life or maintaining order on earth.

Context, Meaning, and Responsibility

Three foundational principles must be kept in mind to read the opening verses of Surah At-Tawbah correctly.

Historical context: These verses were revealed within a specific historical moment, in the midst of a specific social and political crisis. To ignore this context and apply the verses directly to today's conditions is to force a reading upon the text.

Holistic reading: To treat the fifth verse of Surah At-Tawbah in isolation from the fourth and sixth verses is to render the text incomplete and misleading. To understand the Quran, one is obliged to read it as a whole, within its internal coherence.

War as a last resort: Islam defines warfare not as an end in itself but as a last resort to be turned to only when no other solution remains. Justice, mercy, and peace are the core values that encompass — far more broadly — the limited domain in which

Islam permits warfare.

Readings that present the fifth verse of Surah At-Tawbah as "the essence of Islam" contain both a methodological and a moral error. This verse, in fact, regulates the temporary resolution of an exceptional historical crisis; and the verse that follows reminds us that even in the midst of that crisis, humane and moral boundaries must be preserved. In the Quran, the cause for war is not belief but actual hostility and aggression. Understanding Islam requires reading even its most challenging verses within this wholeness — in the light of mercy and justice.

Refuting Claims in the Light of the Quran: A Systematic Response to Criticisms of Islam

Throughout history, various criticisms have been leveled against Islam. Among the most prominent is the claim that the Quran is not a divine revelation but was personally authored by our Prophet Muhammad to serve his own interests. These views, occasionally expressed in atheist and deist circles, may appear plausible at first glance, but upon deeper examination they contradict both historical evidence and the Quran's own content. The claims in question will be addressed one by one, and in the light of Islamic teachings and Quranic verses, the groundlessness of each will be demonstrated.

The Claim of Polygamy

One of the most common accusations against our Prophet Muhammad is that he used the Quran as a tool to justify his polygamous marriages. While this claim may seem plausible at first, a closer look at the social structure of pre-Islamic Arabia reveals a major contradiction. In pre-Islamic Arab society, it was common practice for men to marry an unlimited number of women. In such an environment, it is logically inconsistent to suggest that the Prophet would fabricate a religious text to "legitimize" a right he already possessed. Even more striking is this: if the goal were truly to permit polygamy freely, how can the Quran's explicit limitations on the matter be explained? Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 52, states: "No other women are lawful for you after this, nor are you allowed to exchange them for other wives, even if their beauty pleases you." This verse is a provision that explicitly restricts the Prophet's marriages. It is inconceivable that someone crafting a text to satisfy his own desires would include a regulation so restrictive of himself. On the contrary, this verse functions as an institutional oversight mechanism aimed at establishing justice in society.

The Claim of Plunder and Wealth

Another widespread claim is that the Prophet incorporated verses about war spoils into the Quran in order to accumulate personal wealth. This claim, too, is incompatible with the Quran's overarching message. The Quran explicitly condemns hoarding wealth while repeatedly commanding charity, the giving of zakat, and assistance to the poor. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 219, emphasizes that wealth should be given to others. Someone motivated by personal gain would not be expected to introduce regulations compelling the distribution of his own wealth. As for the matter of war spoils, Surah Al-Anfal, verse 41, commands that one-fifth of the spoils be

allocated to God, the Messenger, relatives, orphans, the poor, and wayfarers. This provision directs the spoils not toward any one individual's control, but toward those in need within the community.

The Claim of Power and War Verses

The third major pillar of atheist criticism is the claim that the Prophet personally composed verses about warfare in order to gain political power. Yet this view contradicts both the historical context of the Quran and the content of its verses. When the Prophet began preaching Islam, he faced intense pressure. He was subjected to economic sanctions by the polytheists, experienced social exclusion, and Muslims suffered physical violence. It is noteworthy that no verses permitting warfare were revealed during the Meccan period. The verses authorizing combat came only after the Muslims had migrated to Medina and were subjected to armed attacks. Surah Al-Hajj, verse 39, states: "Permission has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged." This verse clearly establishes a defensive framework, granting only the right to respond — not the right to initiate aggression. Furthermore, Surah At-Tawbah, verse 6, commands that if a polytheist seeks protection, he must be given safe conduct and escorted to a place of safety. It would have been very difficult for someone in pursuit of power and domination to adopt such a humane stance toward his adversary.

The Claim of Slavery

Some critics argue that the Quran legitimizes slavery and that the Prophet thereby reinforced his own authority. However, when Islam's approach to the issue of slavery is examined, the picture looks very different. Rather than abolishing slavery outright, Islam adopted a comprehensive strategy aimed at its gradual elimination. In Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 177, while defining piety, giving wealth to "those in bondage" is cited as a mark of true virtue. In addition, the Quran presents the freeing of slaves as a means of expiation for various offenses, thereby encouraging the erosion of the institution of slavery. Someone producing a text to consolidate power would not be expected to include provisions that would free his human resources. On the contrary, many slaves were emancipated during the Prophet's lifetime, and this practice became established as one of Islam's core virtues.

The Claim of the "Do Not Enter My House" Verse

Finally, some critics point to Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 53, claiming that the Prophet composed this ruling simply because he was annoyed by visitors. Yet the verse states: "O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted for a meal, without awaiting its readiness. But when you are invited, then enter." It is clear that this verse is not the product of a momentary irritation. The verse embodies universal values such as the protection of individual privacy, showing respect to the members of a household, and establishing social norms of propriety. Indeed, historical sources describe the Prophet as a hospitable personality. This regulation reflects not a personal avoidance, but the aim of strengthening social morality.

The Methodological Problem with Atheist Criticisms

A common methodological flaw runs through all the claims examined above: verses are evaluated in isolation from their context, the Prophet's historical position and way of life are disregarded, and a selective reading is made of the Quran rather than considering its holistic message. Someone genuinely motivated by personal interest would not produce a text that simultaneously restricts himself, commands the distribution of his possessions, and erodes the institution of slavery. The profound impact the Quran has had on millions of people throughout history demonstrates that it is not merely the product of a human self-interest. The claims that the Prophet wrote the Quran for personal gain correspond neither to historical facts nor to the Quran's own content. When the issue of polygamy is examined, the Quran imposes limitations; in the matter of war spoils, wealth is distributed throughout society; in the war verses, the right of self-defense is the foundation; in the matter of slavery, emancipation is encouraged; and in the privacy regulation, a universal moral principle is adopted. Every claim addressed here reveals its own inconsistency when the Quran is evaluated in its entirety. The Quran is a divine source conveying the teachings of Islam to humanity, with our Prophet Muhammad serving as its instrument. To understand this truth, it suffices not to read the verses selectively, but to evaluate them within their full context.

The Absolute Greatness of Allah: The Concepts of Al-Kabir and Akbar

The Quran remains an unparalleled source for introducing humanity to the attributes and names of Allah. These names and attributes are not mere labels; they carry profound meanings that reflect Allah's essence, His relationship with creation, and the very core of the belief in monotheism (tawhid). In Arabic grammar, comparative and superlative forms of adjectives are called "ism-i tafdil." This structure corresponds to expressions in English such as "greater," "most beautiful," or "faster." The ism-i tafdil form logically requires a comparison between at least two entities or qualities. The sentence "This building is large, but that building is larger" is a typical example, as it draws a clear comparison between two buildings. The word "Akbar" is derived from the root "kabir" and falls precisely into this ism-i tafdil pattern, meaning "greater" or "greatest." However, a critical question arises here: if "Akbar" structurally implies a comparison, what does it mean to attribute this word to Allah?

Al-Kabir: The Attribute of Absolute Greatness

Allah being named "Al-Kabir" in the Quran clearly establishes that His greatness requires no comparison. This attribute points to an absolute and intrinsic greatness — one that cannot be measured against the greatness of created beings and that is beyond all comparison. In Surah An-Nisa (4:34), this truth is expressed as follows:

> "Allah is Most High, Most Great."

The phrase "Aliyyun Kabirun" in this verse does not pit Allah's greatness against that of others; rather, it elevates it beyond all comparison entirely. This reality is reinforced in Surah Al-Hajj (22:62):

> "Indeed, Allah is the Most High, the Most Great."

Here, the attribute "Kabir" emphasizes that Allah's greatness is eternal, everlasting, and absolute. The greatness of no created being can be placed in the same category as His; therefore, comparison is not even a possibility.

The Use of the Word "Akbar" in the Quran

What is particularly noteworthy is that the Quran almost never directly attributes the word "Akbar" to Allah as an attribute; instead, it uses this word in comparisons between created things. This pattern of usage reflects a remarkably deliberate linguistic consciousness on the part of the Quran. In Surah An-Nahl (16:41):

> "The reward of the Hereafter is greater."

Here, "Akbar" is used to express that the reward of the Hereafter is greater than the pleasures of worldly life — a comparison made between two things of the same kind. Similarly, in Surah Al-Ankabut (29:45):

> "And the remembrance of Allah is greatest."

Even here, "Akbar" appears in the context of a comparison between dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and other acts of worship.

These examples demonstrate that the Quran uses the word "Akbar" consciously — in contexts where comparison is applicable and when describing relationships between created things.

Satan's Arrogance and the Danger of Claiming Greatness

The Quran also offers a contrasting example to help us understand Allah's greatness: Satan. In Surah Al-A'raf (7:12), Satan says:

> "I am better than him; You created me from fire and created him from clay."

This is one of the most striking manifestos of arrogance in Quranic history. Satan explicitly makes a comparison, regarding himself as superior to Adam. It is precisely at this point that the dangerous ground of claiming greatness is laid bare: greatness based on comparison can always carry the seeds of arrogance, rebellion, and even polytheism. Satan did not merely rebel against Allah — he also made it his mission to lead humanity into the illusion of self-greatness. In this context, the most delicate point of tawhid is internalizing the fact that greatness belongs to Allah alone, and grasping the infinite smallness of every created being before Him.

The Significance of the Attribute "Al-Kabir" in the Understanding of Tawhid

The essence of tawhid is to hold Allah free from any likeness or partner. When it comes to divine attributes, this freedom takes on an even more nuanced meaning. If Allah's greatness were comparable in nature to the greatness of created beings, then His greatness would also be limited and relative. Yet the Allah described by the Quran is far beyond any such category. The attribute "Al-Kabir" declares that Allah's

greatness is intrinsic and absolute — existing beyond time, space, comparison, and limitation. In Surah Al-Isra (17:110):

> "Say: Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful — whichever you call upon, to Him belong the most beautiful names."

This verse shows that regardless of which name is used to address Allah, what truly matters is the intention, the submission, and the awareness of the truth carried by those names. Yet this does not make the careful selection of names and attributes unnecessary — on the contrary, it points to the need for both linguistic consciousness and consciousness of the heart to work together.

Understanding Allah's attributes requires both linguistic precision and deep theological awareness. While the attribute "Al-Kabir" expresses Allah's absolute and incomparable greatness, the word "Akbar" is used in the Quran largely in comparisons between created beings. Nevertheless, saying "Allahu Kabir" to express Allah's absolute greatness offers a linguistically clearer and more directly consistent expression of tawhid. Ultimately, what matters most for believers — regardless of which expression they use — is to feel Allah's greatness not merely at the level of language, but in the depths of the heart, and to experience true submission before that greatness. For Allah's greatness is an eternal and everlasting reality that transcends the limits of words, yet can be felt through sincere faith.

Allahu Kabir — He is absolutely great; His greatness is incomparable.

Religion: From Spiritual Guidance to Commercial Commodity — A Historical and Theological Analysis

Religion is one of the most deep-rooted and enduring institutions in human history. Penetrating every dimension of life — from the individual's inner world to social relations, from moral judgments to political structures — religion, at its core, offers a framework of meaning, a system of guidance, and a sense of accountability. When Islam is examined from this perspective, it represents not merely a belief system but a holistic understanding of life that unites justice, compassion, sharing, and submission to God. Yet when the historical process is examined, it becomes clear that this essence has at times been seriously distorted, and that religious values have been instrumentalized in service of individual and institutional interests. The theological framework established by the Qur'an has gradually been overshadowed by political power, commercial calculations, and institutional interests. Here, we will address both the theological dimensions and the historical course of this distortion, and attempt to demonstrate the harm that the commercialization of religious knowledge and texts has inflicted upon humanity.

The Core Principle of Religion: Knowledge Is Not a Commercial Object

The Qur'an, the source of Islam, prohibits in clear and unambiguous language the transformation of religious teachings into instruments of material gain. This prohibition is not a historical coincidence but a necessary consequence of Islam's worldview. The word of God originates from an infinite and absolute source; it

therefore cannot be measured against, bought, or sold for material values that are limited and transient. Verse 79 of Surah Al-Baqarah states this matter with utmost clarity: "Woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands, then say, 'This is from God,' in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn." Verse 41 of the same surah adds: "And do not sell My verses for a small price, and fear only Me." These expressions show that using religious knowledge for material gain is not merely a moral weakness but a direct divine violation. Verse 77 of Surah Ali 'Imran frames this violation even more gravely: "Indeed, those who sell God's covenant and their oaths for a small price — they will have no share in the Hereafter. God will not speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. And for them is a painful punishment." This verse is particularly striking, for what is at stake here is not merely a commercial error but the desecration of the bond formed with God. Verse 111 of Surah At-Tawbah, meanwhile, reveals Islam's true understanding of trade: "Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth in exchange for Paradise." This verse clarifies that the believer's true covenant is with God, and that this covenant carries a spiritual dimension far beyond material concerns. True commerce, in other words, is sacrificing one's life and wealth in the path of God — not marketing God's words for money. The Prophet Noah embodied this principle through his life. The expression conveyed in verse 109 of Surah Ash-Shu'ara — "I do not ask you for any reward for this" — demonstrates that selflessness in conveying revelation was adopted as a foundational principle. Our Prophet lived a materially humble life, spent his wealth in charity, and never legitimized the accumulation of wealth in the name of religion.

Historical Transformation: Politics, Wealth, and Religious Authority

To what extent was Islam's theological framework — which forbids the commercialization of religious knowledge — preserved through the historical process? When answered with an honest historical gaze, the response is deeply troubling.

The Umayyad Period: The most conspicuous early example of religion's politicization in Islamic history occurred under Umayyad rule. The caliphate transformed into a structure in which religious representation became intertwined with political power. Religious authorities drew close to the palace, fatwas began to align with political interests, and even Friday sermons became laden with praise for the caliph. Religion assumed the function of legitimizing power, and in this process the pure transmission of religious knowledge gave way to interest-driven interpretation.

The Abbasid Period: During the Abbasid era, an institutionalized understanding of religion deepened. Madrasas were established, becoming not only centers of education but also structures producing official religious interpretation. Thousands of hadith narrations emerged; some contained discourses serving the interests of the ruling class or the wealthy. Fabricated sayings such as "The poor will enter Paradise 500 years before the rich" entered the historical record as examples of interest-driven discourse designed to ease class tension.

Sufism and Brotherhoods: Sufi orders established endowments, received wealthy

donations, and acquired vast properties. The fact that some Sufi circles began generating income through fabricated miracle stories about their sheikhs, the subordination of loyalty to God beneath loyalty to the sheikh, and the steady growth of the shrine economy inflicted grave harm upon religion.

The Ottoman Period: In the Ottoman era, judges and muftis attained the status of civil servants. Fatwas began to be shaped according to economic and political objectives; religious endowments came to manage enormous assets, and the administration of these endowments gradually became a significant gateway to personal gain. One of the most striking examples from this period is a fatwa issued in the 18th century in response to the fears of calligraphers (copyists) regarding the printing press. Through this fatwa, the printing of religious works was prohibited, while the printing of books in history, geography, medicine, and literature was deemed permissible. This decision was made purely on the basis of economic and professional concerns, and created a serious obstacle to the dissemination of religious knowledge. It stands as one of the most concrete and documentable examples of fatwas being produced for money.

The Modern Period: In our time, this transformation has taken on a more visible and wide-ranging character. "Popular preachers" have emerged who earn ratings and sponsorships from religious content; sermons have become performances, and religious books commercial products. The Saudi-origin religious publishing sector reaching a billion-dollar market is one of the most concrete indicators of this process. Furthermore, the redefinition of interest in Islamic finance and banking through conceptual reframings such as "profit share" can be evaluated as a striking example of religious sensitivities being used as a commercial instrument.

The Social Dimension: The Social Cost of Commercialization

The commercialization of religious knowledge and texts carries not only theological but serious social consequences. First and foremost, access to religious knowledge becomes a matter of class. Priced books, fee-based courses, and paid platforms pave the way for individuals facing economic hardship to be deprived of this knowledge. Yet the fundamental aim of Islam is to deliver a universal message to all people. This principle of universality directly conflicts with every barrier that transforms religious knowledge into a privilege. Second, disadvantaged groups are most severely affected by this process. Persons with disabilities already face various obstacles in accessing religious sources. It is evident that the visually impaired need audio or Braille-printed books; the hearing impaired need sign language-supported content; and individuals with learning difficulties need simplified and visual narratives. In an environment where religious knowledge is presented as a commercial commodity, the investment required to meet these special needs is often not made — because a profit-oriented model targets large audiences, not marginal groups. This means the responsibility of making religious knowledge accessible to all is not being fulfilled. Third, commercialization erodes trust in religious authority. Clerics living in palaces, sheikhs traveling in luxury vehicles, and religious institutions managed with million-dollar budgets become, in the eyes of the public, representatives not of authentic religious guidance but of worldly interests. This fracture, far from

deepening individual spiritual inquiry, is a serious problem that could alienate people from religion and fundamentally damage public trust in religious guidance.

Solution: Decommodifying Religious Knowledge

It is as important to identify solutions as it is to diagnose the problem. Within the framework of values prescribed by Islam, it is both possible and necessary to free religious knowledge from commerce. At the individual level, a person printing one or two religious books each month at a digital print center using their own means and distributing them free of charge amounts to reaching dozens of people per year. This is a simple but powerful step. Distributing content free of charge on digital platforms in PDF, e-book, or audiobook format offers both cost-free and wide-ranging access. Moreover, with a charity-chain approach such as "Take this book, pass it on to someone else or contribute to its printing," the spread can be sustained organically. At the institutional level, collaborating with foundations, associations, and mosque communities to share the costs of book printing can transform the duty of religious outreach from an individual burden into a collective responsibility. Crowdfunding platforms can also be used effectively toward this end. Developing special solutions for persons with disabilities constitutes the most important dimension of this responsibility. Audiobook formats, Braille prints, sign language videos, simplified language and large-print publications, screen reader-compatible digital platforms, and volunteer home-visit networks are concrete steps that can be implemented in this area. Municipalities, office of muftis, foundations, and civil society organizations can offer free religious education courses for persons with disabilities, available both in person and online. Additionally, preparing spiritual guidance content addressing the psychological burdens of disability — exploring themes of patience, trust in God, and hope — may also be considered within this scope. Islam, at its essence, commands purification, sharing, justice, and turning toward God. Sacred texts, the proclamation of the prophets, and religious teachings are a divine heritage entrusted to humanity. The transformation of this heritage into a commercial commodity is incompatible both with the clear rulings of the Qur'an and with religion's universal understanding of justice. The process of commercialization that took shape throughout history through the interaction of power, wealth, and the religious class represents not Islam's pure essence but interpretations that have deviated from it. The selfless proclamation of the prophets, the example of the companions who spent their wealth in charity, and the Qur'an's repeatedly voiced warnings make it imperative to recognize this deviation. Religious books should be spread not through money but through sincere intention and with the aim of spiritual reward. Equal and free access to religious knowledge for all people — above all for persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups — is not merely the verbal profession but the lived practice of the Qur'an's principles of justice, compassion, and brotherhood. Each step of this practice is both an individual act of worship and a social responsibility.

Wisdom (Hikmah): The Power to See and Apply Truth

One of the oldest questions of the human mind is this: Is knowledge enough? Does knowing that something is right mean you are capable of doing it? Throughout

history, philosophers and thinkers have confronted this question, trying to bridge the deep chasm between knowledge and action. This is precisely where hikmah — one of the most central concepts in Islam — comes into play. Though a surface reading might translate it simply as "wisdom" or "deep knowledge," such a definition falls short of capturing the concept's true depth. Hikmah means acquiring knowledge, giving it meaning, and applying it most correctly in the concrete realities of life. In other words, hikmah is not merely an intellectual act — it is also a moral and practical excellence.

The Conceptual Framework of Hikmah

The Arabic word hikmah derives from the root h-k-m, which carries the meanings of judging, ruling, and doing something firmly and fittingly. The word hakim, derived from the same root, means both "one who rules" and "one who knows all things in their proper place." At the heart of hikmah, therefore, lies the idea of aptness: doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way.

In Islam, hikmah has been examined through three essential dimensions:

The first is cognitive hikmah: the ability to see reality as it truly is, to grasp the truth behind appearances. In this respect, hikmah differs from ordinary knowledge, for it comprehends not only "what is" but also "why it is so" and "what it means."

The second is moral hikmah: the virtue of distinguishing right from wrong, the beautiful from the ugly, the lasting from the fleeting — and making choices accordingly. In this dimension, hikmah transforms a person not only at the level of thought but also at the level of character and will.

The third is practical hikmah: the ability to apply one's knowledge and moral understanding correctly to the concrete situations of life. Corresponding to Aristotle's concept of phronesis, this dimension reveals that hikmah is not merely a theoretical virtue but a living force that operates within life itself.

The presence of all three dimensions together explains why hikmah is so fundamentally different from, and more valuable than, ordinary knowledge.

Hikmah in the Quran: A Tremendous Good

The Quran endows hikmah with extraordinary worth. Verse 269 of Surah Al-Baqarah delivers on this matter a clear and unequivocal ruling:

> "He grants wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has certainly been given a great good. And none will be reminded except those of understanding." (Al-Baqarah, 2:269)

Every word of this verse deserves careful reflection.

The phrase "He grants to whom He wills" emphasizes that hikmah cannot be obtained by any worldly measure — its source is a divine gift. This means hikmah cannot be bought with years of education alone, nor with great wealth. It is a bestowal from God.

The phrase "certainly been given a great good" positions hikmah as one of the greatest blessings one can possess. The verse is unequivocal on this point: the one who is given hikmah has truly received an immense good. Among worldly blessings one might count wealth, property, or status — yet all of these are transient and do not always guide their possessor toward what is right. Hikmah, by contrast, is a treasure that retains its validity both in this world and in the hereafter, perpetually directing its bearer toward what is true.

The phrase "none will be reminded except those of understanding" is equally significant. Only ulu'l-albab — minds that truly reflect and comprehend — can grasp what hikmah is, how great a blessing it represents, and why it is so precious. This tells us that recognizing the value of hikmah is itself a mark of maturity.

The Deep Difference Between Hikmah and Knowledge

In the modern age, knowledge is largely understood as data and information. A person connected to the internet can access more knowledge in seconds than any generation in history could have imagined. Yet this abundance of information does not mean that people make better decisions, lead more virtuous lives, or build more just societies. This paradox reveals the fundamental difference between hikmah and knowledge.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts, data, and truths. Hikmah is the capacity to give these facts meaning, to perceive the relationships among them, and — most importantly — to translate this understanding into practice. A physician may memorize every medical textbook; yet standing before a patient and making the right decision requires something beyond learned information: intuition, experience, depth. That depth is hikmah.

In Islam, this distinction has been particularly developed in the context of the relationship between 'ilm (knowledge) and 'amal (action). Knowledge illuminates; action brings that illumination into life. But the power that bridges the two — that transforms knowledge into action — is hikmah. Knowledge without hikmah resembles a traveler without a guide who holds a map: it shows the right direction but does not move one forward. Action without hikmah becomes blind effort — a path cleared for well-intentioned mistakes.

The Story of Saul (Talut): Redefining Hikmah and Merit

The Quranic story of Talut reveals in a strikingly vivid way that hikmah is not merely a philosophical concept but also a practical social and political reality. The event narrated in verse 247 of Surah Al-Baqarah concerns the Children of Israel's rejection of Talut's leadership:

> "And their prophet said to them, 'Indeed, God has sent Talut as a king over you.' They said, 'How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him, and he has not been given an abundance of wealth?' He said, 'Indeed, God has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And God gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And God is All-

Encompassing and All-Knowing.'" (Al-Baqarah, 2:247)

The theological and social significance this story carries is remarkably rich.

The community's objection: The Children of Israel raised two main objections to Talut's leadership: first, a claim to superior lineage; second, the argument that Talut was not sufficiently wealthy. These two grounds represent two great errors that have recurred throughout history: treating ancestry and wealth as the measure of merit.

The divine response: The answer given through God's prophet thoroughly refutes both errors. It is God who chose Talut, and His rationale is clear: breadth of knowledge and strength of body. True leadership, in other words, is measured not by how wealthy a person is or what lineage they come from, but by how knowledgeable, how virtuous, and how capable they are.

"He gives His sovereignty to whom He wills": This phrase reminds us of who truly owns positions of power and authority. While humans calibrate power among themselves according to wealth, property, and lineage, God places this equation on an entirely different axis. Divine providence reaches far beyond worldly calculations.

This story holds deep meaning for today as well. In the modern world, debates over merit are still largely built on similar errors: which school one attended, how much wealth one possesses, which circles one belongs to. Yet true merit, just as the Quranic story of Talut demonstrates, is a synthesis of knowledge, virtue, and the hikmah that brings the two together.

Power Without Hikmah, and Hikmah Without Power

Another noteworthy element in the story of Talut is that both knowledge and physical strength are mentioned together as requirements for leadership. This offers an important clue about what hikmah truly means: it is not an abstract intellectual virtue but a practical force that operates within real life and produces concrete results.

Power without hikmah generates destruction. History is filled with the ruins created by leaders who possessed great physical or political power yet did not know where or how to direct it. On the other hand, hikmah without power is also incomplete; for a mind that sees the truth but lacks the means to enact it remains confined to the world of ideals.

True hikmah brings these two together: seeing what is right and possessing the power, resolve, and skill to bring it into being. This is why in Islam, the person who possesses hikmah is simultaneously just and decisive — they have knowledge, but that knowledge does not leave them motionless; on the contrary, it guides them toward what is right.

The Source of Hikmah and Human Responsibility

The Quran's description of hikmah as something God "grants to whom He wills" might at first glance evoke a sense of passivity or helplessness: "If God grants it to whom He wills, what good is my effort?" Yet this interpretation contradicts the

general spirit of the Quran and the foundational understanding of Islam.

Hikmah is a blessing, and it comes to the one whose heart God has opened. Like rain that falls for everyone, yet only enriches the soil that has been tilled. A person prepares themselves for hikmah by seeking knowledge, through contemplation, through reckoning with their own soul, and by striving to arrange their life according to what is right. God's providence does not render this preparation futile; rather, it crowns it.

From this perspective, what a person must do in order to attain hikmah is the following: first, to be engaged in a sincere pursuit of knowledge — not for worldly gain alone, but for the purpose of understanding truth and living rightly; second, to strive to apply what one has learned to life, building a constant bridge between knowledge and action; third, to develop the maturity to draw lessons from both successes and mistakes; and finally, to accept one's own limitations and to take refuge in God in order to make sound decisions.

Hikmah and Justice: A Social Dimension

Hikmah is not solely an individual virtue; it also fulfills a powerful social and political function. Societies are sustained by wise leaders, justice operates through wise judges, and knowledge nourishes life through wise scholars. The story of Talut is not merely an individual tale — it is a collective lesson about how a community will or will not recognize its true leader.

The attempt of the Children of Israel to measure merit by wealth represents not only that community's failing, but a trap into which communities of every era may fall. Hikmah is the very common sense that can deliver a society from this trap. Power is essential for establishing a just order; but it is hikmah that determines where, when, and how that power should be used. This is why in Islamic political thought, the ideal ruler is one who is both just and wise: possessing power, yet wielding it in the service of what is right.

Hikmah Is Not a Destination — It Is a Journey

Hikmah is not a treasure acquired once and held forever. It is a process of continuous wakefulness, continuous questioning, and continuous maturation. Every new experience, every difficulty, every moment of decision offers a person the opportunity to test and deepen their hikmah.

What the Quran teaches us is this: the one who is given hikmah possesses a great good, for they are equipped not only with knowledge but also with the ability to use that knowledge in the most correct way. The story of Talut, in turn, reminds us: true merit is measured not by material wealth, but by knowledge, virtue, and divine providence.

Within this understanding, what a person must do is find their worth not in the fleeting appeal of wealth and possessions, but in the power to see truth and enact it — and in every decision, every choice, to ask: "Is this what hikmah requires?"

The answer sometimes comes easily; sometimes it demands a great inner struggle. But to keep asking this question is the first and most essential step on the path toward hikmah.

True power is measured not by what one possesses, but by what that possession serves. And the one who calibrates this measure rightly has drawn close to hikmah.

The Future of Brotherhood, Not the Burden of the Past

Islam, as one of history's most deep-rooted and universal religions, has offered humanity not merely forms of worship, but a profound moral philosophy destined to shape individuals' inner worlds, social relationships, and understanding of civilization. At the center of this philosophy lie the concepts of justice, tolerance, and peace — concepts that directly determine both individual life and the relations societies forge with one another. Yet throughout history, Muslims have at times strayed from the spirit of this universal teaching, lingering in the shadow of the past and sowing seeds of resentment and division. The Sunni-Shia divide represents one of the most striking examples of this estrangement; centuries of accumulated grievances and political calculations have torn these two great Islamic traditions apart. And yet the message of the Quran was offered to humanity precisely as a guide for overcoming conflicts of this kind.

Al-Baqarah 134 and Liberation from the Burden of the Past

Verse 134 of Surah Al-Baqarah articulates a remarkably striking truth: *"That was a nation which has passed on. It will have what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."* At first glance this verse may appear to be merely a historical observation, yet at its core it carries an extraordinarily deep psychological and social message. The verse powerfully emphasizes the principle of individual responsibility: every person is accountable for their own actions; the sins or virtues of past generations are not inherited by those who follow. This principle forms one of the cornerstones of Islamic ethics and frees humanity from being a prisoner of the past. To blame others today for what their ancestors did, to judge them with anger, or to harbor hostility toward them directly contradicts the spirit of this verse. Furthermore, the verse indirectly draws attention to the weight that collective memory exerts upon human psychology. Societies pass their historical traumas from generation to generation; while this transmission may sometimes serve the purpose of learning and reflection, it more often takes the form of reproducing resentment and prejudice. The Quran intervenes at precisely this point, inviting humanity out of this vicious cycle: understand the past, learn from it — but do not become its prisoner.

Islam's Understanding of Tolerance and Peace

Islam's teaching of tolerance is not an abstract principle but a concrete and livable social reality. The social order established by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina demonstrated that people of different faiths and traditions could coexist. At the conquest of Mecca, an act of pardon unprecedented in history was proclaimed; Muslims who had for years faced torture, exile, and war displayed remarkable

magnanimity toward their enemies. This historical example shows that Islam's understanding of peace is not mere rhetoric, but a model that can be put into practice in real life. In Islam, tolerance is not weakness; on the contrary, it is a sign of great strength and maturity. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad repeatedly emphasized that anger blinds a person, while patience is among the greatest of virtues. Many verses of the Quran reinforce this understanding. Humanity was created as different tribes and nations so that they might come to know and understand one another; superiority belongs only to the one who is most God-conscious. This principle calls Muslims to see differences not as a threat, but as a rich diversity created by God.

The Historical Background of the Sunni-Shia Divide

The Sunni-Shia divide began with a political crisis in the 7th century CE. The dispute over the caliphate that arose following the death of the Prophet Muhammad gradually acquired a religious dimension; in this process, the tragedy of Karbala became the founding grief of the Shia tradition. Over the centuries this division gained political, cultural, and theological dimensions, and the two great traditions drifted ever further apart. However, there is an important point to be noted in reading this history: the Sunni-Shia divide is fed, above all, by a political origin. Theological differences were largely shaped afterward and deepened as political conflict was transposed onto a religious plane. This reality shows that the divide is not an insurmountable or natural conflict, but rather a product of historical circumstances. Moreover, both traditions share the foundational source of Islam: the Quran. This common ground clearly demonstrates that the bridges between the two communities can be rebuilt.

The Individual and Social Cost of Resentment and Hostility

Resentment begins in a person's inner world but in time transforms into a fire that engulfs society. From a psychological perspective, the individual who harbors resentment remains perpetually bound to the past; this bond consumes their energy, dulls their effectiveness, and prevents them from forming healthy relationships. Islam's principle of "striving to see the good in people" is, in fact, remarkably aligned with modern psychology's concept of "positive focus." At the social level, resentment and hostility produce far graver consequences. When one looks at the humanitarian catastrophes that Sunni-Shia conflicts have brought about today in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and other regions, the concrete dimensions of this cost become clearly visible. Millions of people have been displaced, cities reduced to ruins, and traumas inflicted that will endure for generations. At the root of all this lies, in large part, sectarian conflict fueled by centuries-old prejudices and political calculations. Islam's warning on this matter is clear: "Indeed, the believers are brothers." This verse is a universal call addressed not only to Sunni or only to Shia Muslims, but to all believers.

The Fine Line Between Learning from the Past and Being Trapped in It

An important distinction must be underlined here: forgetting the past and not being enslaved by the past are two different things. Islam does not counsel the erasure of history, but rather the drawing of lessons from it. Karbala holds an important place in humanity's memory, carrying an instructive value as a symbol of standing against

oppression and maintaining dignity in the face of injustice. Similarly, other painful events from early Islamic history can be evaluated as sources of moral instruction. The problem arises not from reading this history with an instructive perspective, but from projecting it directly onto present-day social relations. Communities that are hostile to one another today over events that occurred fourteen hundred years ago are, in effect, violating the boundary drawn by the Quran in Al-Baqarah verse 134 — for that verse plainly declares the meaninglessness of holding present-day people responsible for the actions of a past community.

Concrete Steps Toward Building Sunni-Shia Brotherhood

Rebuilding friendship and brotherhood between the two communities is possible not through fine words alone, but through concrete steps.

Highlighting Shared Values: Both traditions believe in the oneness of God, the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad, and the Quran as sacred scripture. These fundamental common grounds should constitute the starting point for dialogue.

Academic and Scholarly Dialogue: The coming together of the Islamic world's leading centers of learning to discuss theological matters in a transparent and academic setting will make a significant contribution to clearing up misunderstandings. Such dialogues have proven highly effective in breaking down the walls between the two communities.

Resisting Political Instrumentalization: The great majority of sectarian conflicts are fed by political actors who instrumentalize religious identity for their own ends. It is critically important for Muslims to be aware of this manipulation and to resist it, for the sake of social peace.

Awareness in Education and Media: Religious education passed on to children and young people must be purged of elements that marginalize or incite hatred; media, meanwhile, must act with a sense of responsibility that foregrounds shared values rather than inflaming sectarian conflict.

Bridges Between Civil Society and Individuals: Alongside institutional dialogue, interpersonal relationships also play a decisive role in this process. Bringing together Muslims of different sects in joint projects, social activities, and humanitarian work transforms the rhetoric of brotherhood at the theoretical level into a practical reality.

The Door Opening onto the Future

The message offered by Islam retains its full meaning across the ages, even today. This message, crystallized in verse 134 of Al-Baqarah, frees the human being from being a prisoner of the past and invites them to become an architect of the future. Every individual is accountable for their own actions; societies, rather than being crushed beneath the weight of the past, must act with the responsibility of building a shared future. When it comes to Sunni-Shia relations, this call carries a particularly profound significance. When the two great Islamic traditions set aside their centuries-old grievances and political calculations and meet on their common ground — when they build a fraternal environment in which they understand one another's pain,

respect one another's values, and see one another's goodness — they will have put forward a model of peace not only for their own communities, but for all of humanity. Resentment and hostility blind a person; respect and understanding open the horizon. This ancient teaching of Islam responds today, perhaps more than ever before, to a profound need. We have no power to change the past; but we always possess the will to build the future together. This will is one of the most precious treasures that Islam has bestowed upon humanity.

Life and Death in Islam: Divine Decree and Human Responsibility

Islam frames life as a journey encompassed from beginning to end by the will and decree of Allah. On this journey, a person does not know how long they will live, yet knows that every moment unfolds within a divine plan. The Quran makes this reality clear in numerous verses. The process stretching from humanity's creation to death unfolds within Allah's absolute knowledge and will. Here, we will examine this understanding of divine decree in light of Quranic verses and explore in depth humanity's position and responsibility in the face of that decree.

Ajal: The Inevitability of a Predetermined Span

One of Islam's foundational concepts, ajal, denotes the moment of death appointed for every person from the instant they enter the world. This concept carries a profound awareness that life is both meaningful and finite. Surah Al-Imran, verse 145, expresses this reality as follows: "And it is not for a soul to die except by permission of Allah at a decree determined." This statement is extraordinarily powerful, for it declares that death is under no circumstance accidental — rather, every individual's life is subject to a divine programme. From the warrior who falls on the battlefield to the elderly person who closes their eyes in a sickbed, every death is a reflection of this divine decree.

Surah Al-An'am, verse 2, approaches the matter from the perspective of creation: "It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term, and a specified time is with Him." Two important points stand out here. First, humanity was created from a humble substance — clay; second, the lifespan of this humble being is determined from the very outset. When these two realities are considered together, the extent of human limitation becomes unmistakably clear. Just as a person cannot govern their own beginning, they cannot govern their end either; meaning is found in how one uses the time between these two boundaries.

Immutability: Reckoning with Time

One of the great illusions of the modern age is that humanity can challenge death through technology and science — advances in medicine, the treatment of disease, research aimed at extending lifespan. All these efforts are reflections of the human desire for immortality. The Quran, however, offers a realistic and humble perspective in response to this desire. Surah Yunus, verse 49, carries a striking clarity on this point: "For every nation is a term. When their time has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede it."

This verse points not only to an individual truth but to a social one as well. Civilisations, nations, and communities exist and perish within appointed spans, just as individuals do. Looking at history, one can see this reality in concrete form: great empires rose, yet each in time experienced its fall. The phrase "they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede it" underscores the divine certainty surrounding ajal. No matter how powerful a person may be, or how helpless they may find themselves, they cannot step outside the appointed time. This is both the deepest consolation and the starkest warning Islam offers humanity: there is no escape from death, but preparation for it is possible.

Gratitude and Responsibility: Making Good Use of Time

The phrase "We will reward the grateful" in Al-Imran verse 145 indicates that life is not merely a matter of duration. What truly matters is whether that duration is spent in gratitude and awareness, or in ingratitude and heedlessness. In Islam, gratitude is not simply a verbal expression of thanks. Being mindful of one's blessings, using them appropriately, and ultimately living a life in accordance with Allah's pleasure — this is gratitude in its deepest expression. In this context, human life is regarded as the most precious trust Allah has placed with a person. To squander that life is to betray the trust. This Quranic teaching invites humanity to make the most of every moment: to do good, to seek knowledge, and to be of benefit to society. For one does not know how much time remains, and therefore there is no justification for delay.

Fear of Death and Peace: Understanding Decree Correctly

Fear of death is one of the most universal psychological realities in human history. Yet Islam's understanding of ajal provides a powerful foundation for making peace with this fear. If the time of death is a moment determined by Allah — one that can neither be brought forward nor put back — then fear can give way to surrender and tranquillity. It is important to emphasise that this surrender is not blind helplessness. On the contrary, it expresses a deep trust in the Being who created the universe and humanity, who knows all things and has power over all things. The phrase in Yunus verse 49 — "Say: I do not possess for myself any harm or benefit except what Allah wills" — is a concise articulation of this surrender. When a person accepts that they hold no power over their own fate, they are freed both from the sickness of arrogance and from the anxiety of helplessness.

Conclusion

When the Quran's teachings on ajal, decree, and responsibility are considered as a whole, they reveal a worldview that is thoroughly coherent and deeply attuned to human nature. A person does not know when they will be born or when they will die, and cannot change either. The transience of life does not render it worthless — quite the opposite: it makes every moment a unique and unrepeatable opportunity. Faith in Allah's decree invites humanity to a conscious and responsible stance. A person who must choose between this world and the next makes that choice anew each day, in every action. Ultimately, the Islamic understanding of life and death is built upon a balance that calls humanity simultaneously to humility and to action. Surrendering to

divine decree and living with responsibility do not exclude each other within this understanding — rather, they complement each other perfectly.

The Sirat Bridge: The Incorporation of a Mythological Concept into Islam

Throughout Islamic history, the original teachings of the Quran have at times become intertwined with cultural, mythological, and oral traditions. One of the most striking examples of this intermingling is the concept of the "Sirat Bridge," which has become an extremely widespread belief among ordinary Muslims. Although this concept has been placed at the center of many Muslims' understanding of the afterlife, a careful reading of the Quran reveals that it does not appear explicitly anywhere in the text. Here, we will examine the mythological origins of the Sirat Bridge, its relationship to the Quran's teachings on the afterlife, and how this concept came to be accepted as religious truth over time — all from a critical perspective.

Mythological Origins: The Universal Journey of the Bridge Image

The image of a bridge or river crossing symbolizing the post-death journey is a universal mythological motif stretching back to the oldest belief systems in human history. This motif appears in similar forms across independent geographies and cultures.

In Sumerian mythology, the River Hubur — which the souls of the dead were required to cross — stands before the gate opening into Kur, the land of the dead. Souls reach the other world by crossing this river. The crossing here is not merely a physical journey; it is also a symbolic ritual representing the end of the world and entry into another plane of existence.

In Zoroastrianism, these images take on a far more systematic form. In the concept known as the "Chinvat Bridge" or "Bridge of Separation," souls are judged upon a bridge after death. For righteous souls the bridge is wide and easy to cross; for wicked souls it narrows, sharpens, and ultimately ends in a fall. This description overlaps to a remarkable degree with the Sirat Bridge narrative that later became widespread in the Islamic world.

In Scandinavia, the Bifrost Bridge is a rainbow bridge built between Asgard and Midgard. The gods use this bridge to pass between the two realms. Here too, the bridge image is used as a means connecting two different worlds.

In Hinduism, the River Vaitarna — which sinful souls must cross while enduring great suffering — serves a similar function of trial and purification.

All of these examples demonstrate that the motif of a bridge or river crossing is not unique to any particular culture or religion; rather, it is a product of humanity's universal mythological imagination concerning death and what lies beyond. The incorporation of this image into Islamic literature must therefore be regarded not as the product of independent revelation, but as the result of cultural permeability and exchange.

The Quran's Vision of the Afterlife: A Binary Order

The Quran draws an extremely clear and consistent framework regarding life after death. The fundamental axis of this framework is binary: Paradise and Hell. People will be directed to one of these two destinations in accordance with their beliefs and deeds in this worldly life. The Quran leaves no ambiguity on this matter. Verses 71, 72, and 73 of Surah Az-Zumar lay out this binary order with striking clarity. The unbelievers are driven in groups to Hell; the gates are opened and the keepers address them. Those who feared God are led in groups to Paradise; the gates are opened for them and the guardians greet them with peace. In this passage describing both groups, there is no mention of any bridge crossing, any danger of falling from a bridge, or any intermediate transitional process. People arrive directly at their destinations. This stands in direct contradiction to the Sirat Bridge narrative, which presents the bridge as a mandatory stage that must be crossed in order to reach Paradise over Hell — thereby inventing an unnecessary third stage alongside the direct and binary vision of the afterlife that the Quran has drawn.

The Concept of A'raf: A Misinterpreted Term

Another concept frequently raised in discussions of the Sirat Bridge is A'raf — the only surah in the Quran named after a term that also appears within it. A correct understanding of the expression "al-A'raf" used in this surah, which also forms its name, is of critical importance for a sound assessment of the subject. The word A'raf, derived from the Arabic root "urf," carries the meanings of a high place, a hilltop, a wave crest, or a boundary line. A'raf, the plural of the word, can be defined as an elevated place or boundary area separating two regions. In the Quran, this concept points to a high place situated between Paradise and Hell. However, over time a significant semantic shift occurred in the way this word was interpreted. In classical exegesis, A'raf was initially treated in its geographical and figurative sense, but in later periods it began to be interpreted as an intermediate zone where those whose good and evil deeds are equal await, a place for those who can go neither to Paradise nor to Hell, or a stopping point for those awaiting the Day of Reckoning. Some narrations claimed that those in this place were martyrs or prophets. Yet upon close examination of the Quranic verses, it becomes clear that A'raf is neither a third destination nor a permanent intermediate space. In verses 46 and 47 of Surah Al-A'raf, it is related that those at this elevated place recognize the people of Paradise by their faces and greet them, and that when they look toward the people of the Fire they seek refuge in God from being among them. This narrative indicates that A'raf is not a permanent location, but rather an elevated threshold symbolizing a momentary wait that separates the two destinations. Consequently, far from supporting the existence of the Sirat Bridge, the concept of A'raf actually reinforces the Quran's fundamental binary order and confirms that the bridge narrative has no Quranic basis.

The Mechanisms by Which Superstitions Infiltrate Religion

Understanding how concepts like the Sirat Bridge became religious truths over time requires not only a critical reading of this specific example, but of the production and transmission of religious knowledge in general. The codification of hadith literature in Islamic history enabled a great many oral narratives to be compiled and committed to writing over the centuries. This process created fertile ground for

certain narrations to become colored by cultural and mythological elements and then attached to religious texts. The detailed descriptions concerning the Sirat Bridge are found predominantly in hadith literature. Depictions such as the bridge being thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword are based not directly on the Quran, but on various chains of narration. The warning expressed with striking force in verse 170 of Surah Al-Baqarah targets precisely this dynamic. The statement — "When they are told to follow what God has revealed, they say: No, we will follow what we found our fathers doing" — is a serious critique of the unquestioning transmission of ancestral tradition. This verse emphasizes that not everything transmitted in the name of religion should be taken as a basis, but only those teachings grounded in the Quran.

A Call to Return to the Quran

The Sirat Bridge is a universal crossing image whose mythological roots are clearly traceable — encountered in similar forms across many belief systems, from Zoroastrianism to Sumerian tradition, from Norse mythology to Hinduism. Its incorporation into Islamic literature is the outcome not of an original revelation, but of a historical process shaped by the accumulation of cultural interactions, oral tradition, and interpretive layers. The Quran's vision of the afterlife is built upon a binary and direct structure that leaves no room for a bridge crossing. When the clear statements of Surah Az-Zumar, the correct reading of A'raf, and the critical warning of Al-Baqarah are considered together, it becomes plainly evident that this concept has no Quranic foundation. Measuring the distance between what is said in the name of religion and the Quran is the intellectual and moral responsibility of every Muslim. The most reliable shield against superstitions is a critical reading practice that employs both reason and the Quran together. For the Quran describes itself as "a clear book" and "a complete guide." Every additional layer invented beyond this guide does not deepen religion — it clouds it.

Islamic Beliefs About the Afterlife: Superstitious Traditions and the Importance of Organ Donation

Islam, as a comprehensive religion offering guidance for both worldly and spiritual life, presents a clear doctrine regarding death and the hereafter. However, over the course of history, various beliefs and practices foreign to these teachings have crept into Islam through cultural influences and misinterpretations. Chief among these practices is shrouding (kafan). Widely accepted in society and presented as a religious obligation, this ritual carries characteristics that contradict the spirit of the Quran and genuine Islamic understanding. This article offers a comprehensive assessment of the origins of shrouding, its true place and meaning in Islam, and then the religious and humanitarian dimensions of organ donation.

The Origin of Shrouding and Its Place in Islam

Shrouding is the tradition of wrapping a deceased body in a special cloth. Although the vast majority of society has adopted this practice as an Islamic obligation, this acceptance does not rest on a solid foundation upon closer examination. Looking at the historical origins of shrouding, it becomes clear that this tradition was widespread in various societies in the pre-Islamic era. Mummification and wrapping

rituals in ancient Egypt, and various burial preparations in Mesopotamia, reveal that this tradition has deep-rooted origins. It appears that these practices were gradually presented as part of Islam — particularly through cultural interactions during the spread of Islam. From this perspective, shrouding can be regarded as an example of polytheistic-origin practices being dressed in an Islamic guise.

Examining the Quran, no command or recommendation regarding shrouding is found. On the contrary, the Quran paints a remarkably plain picture when recounting the first burial. In verse 31 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, it is narrated that after one of Adam's sons killed the other, God sent a crow to teach him how to bury: *"Then Allah sent a crow scratching the ground, to show him how to bury his brother's corpse."* What is noteworthy in this verse is that the first burial example involves no shroud whatsoever. Burying the body in the earth was deemed sufficient; no wrapping or covering ritual is indicated. This is the clearest illustration of the Quran's perspective on burial.

The Claimed Functions of Shrouding and Reality

Proponents of shrouding generally put forward two core arguments: first, that the shroud prevents the odor of the deceased body; and second, that it is an expression of final respect shown to the deceased. Both arguments are open to scrutiny from scientific as well as religious perspectives.

The odor-prevention claim is inconsistent with biological realities. The decomposition of a body buried in the ground is an inevitable biological process, whether shrouded or not. Environmental factors such as soil depth, soil type, moisture levels, and temperature can influence the speed of this process. Dense soils like clay, for example, can slow the dispersal of gases, and sufficiently deep graves can make it harder for odors to reach the surface. However, all these factors stem from soil composition and burial depth; the role of the shroud in this process is extremely limited and does not go beyond the symbolic.

As for the respect argument, the Quran's guidance must again be consulted. In the verse from Al-Ma'idah quoted above, the first burial example took place without any special covering or ritual. If shrouding were a necessary element of respect for the deceased, the Quran would have presented this example differently. Respect for the deceased is shown not through external and material rituals, but by praying for that person, remembering them well, and supporting those they have left behind.

Hadiths and Narrations Regarding Shrouding

The majority of hadiths presented as the Islamic basis for shrouding also face serious criticism. All hadiths were fabricated after the death of our Prophet Muhammad and attributed to him. This applies not only to shrouding but to many funeral rituals as well. Evaluated within a framework that places the Quran at the center as the source of religious knowledge, presenting practices that have no clear Quranic verse and rely solely on disputed narrations as obligatory religious practices is not acceptable.

Unnecessary Expenditures and Social Cost

Shrouding and the accompanying fees for ritual washers (gassal) place a significant burden on some family budgets. When families with limited financial means are directed toward expenses they cannot afford due to social pressure, this creates both an economic and psychological burden. Once it is understood that these expenditures are not a religious obligation, it becomes possible to direct these resources toward far more meaningful areas. Direct assistance to impoverished families, contributions to education, or support in the field of health are far more efficient alternatives in terms of both earning individual spiritual merit and creating social benefit.

Organ Donation: A Practice Aligned with the Spirit of Islam

One of the most tangible ways to provide genuine and lasting benefit after death is organ donation. Islam has made the value it places on human life abundantly clear. Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 32, states: "And whoever saves one life, it is as if he has saved all of mankind." This verse equates saving a human life with the spiritual value of saving all of humanity. Organ donation is one of the most direct ways to put this principle into practice.

Looking at the situation specifically in Turkey, the picture is concerning. According to data from the Ministry of Health from November 2025, 33,589 patients in the country are awaiting organ transplants. A significant portion of these patients lose their lives because a suitable donor cannot be found. The low rate of organ donation among individuals who have experienced brain death is one of the most important factors deepening this tragic picture. Behind this low rate lies not only a lack of information, but also hesitations created by superstitions and misguided religious interpretations.

Regarding the Islamic legitimacy of organ donation, strong arguments exist. While saving a person's life is defined as one of the greatest acts of goodness, allowing organs that would otherwise be buried uselessly in the ground to sustain another person's life is in complete harmony with Islam's general moral understanding. After death, the body no longer has any function; yet the organs within that body can offer life to others for years.

The Social Effects of Superstitious Beliefs

The example of shrouding is highly instructive for observing the effects of misguided religious understanding on society. When a practice is presented as though it were a religious obligation, people avoid questioning it, and those who do question it face social pressure. This cycle creates fertile ground for erroneously inherited practices to persist across generations. Yet Islam presents itself as a religion that encourages reason and inquiry, not blind imitation. The Quran's emphasis on reasoning, thinking, and investigation serves as a decisive guide at this point. One does not need detailed theological training to see that practices like shrouding have no basis in the Quran; a direct and unbiased reading of the Quran is sufficient.

The essence of Islam is to offer moral and spiritual guidance that leads humanity to

salvation both in this world and the next. Practices that originate outside this guidance, yet come to be perceived as an inseparable part of the religion over time, mislead people both materially and spiritually. Shrouding is one of the most prominent examples of such misleading practices: it has no basis in the Quran, is not biologically functional, and is not a genuine expression of respect for the deceased. Organ donation, by contrast, is in complete alignment with the supreme value the Quran ascribes to human life, with Islam's emphasis on charity and doing good, and with the most concrete form of service to humanity.

Death is the moment a person severs all ties with this world; yet the organs in that person's body can continue sustaining others' lives. This is, in the truest sense, a deed carried into both this world and the next. Freeing oneself from superstitious beliefs is the first step toward building a more enlightened society. This awareness will reduce unnecessary expenditures, increase public interest in organ donation, and contribute to a more accurate understanding of Islam's true teachings. No practice whose source is not the Quran can be made obligatory in the name of Islam. Recognizing this truth and acting accordingly is both an individual and a collective responsibility.

The Quran Is for the Living: The Fallacy of Conveying Deeds to the Dead

At the heart of Islam lies the principle that individuals must confront their own actions and be held accountable solely for their own deeds. This principle is the cornerstone of both moral freedom and divine justice. Yet throughout history, certain practices have pushed against the boundaries of this principle — particularly rituals performed on behalf of the dead, which have become concrete examples of departure from Islam's original teaching. Chief among these is the tradition of reciting the Quran for the deceased.

Every text has an intended audience. The Quran defines its own audience explicitly. Surah Sad, verse 29, states:

> "A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, so that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded."

Two critical elements stand out in this verse: reflection and reasoning. The Quran is described as a guide to be contemplated, internalized, and put into practice. Do the dead possess the capacity to reflect or reason? This question lies at the heart of the matter. Death is the moment when consciousness, will, and the faculty of moral responsibility come to an end. It is therefore theologically impossible to establish a relationship between the subject the Quran addresses and a lifeless body. Surah Ya-Sin, verse 70, makes this point even clearer:

> "To warn whoever is alive and justify the word against the disbelievers."

Surah Ya-Sin is traditionally the chapter most commonly recited for the dead. Yet a verse within the surah itself clearly states that the act of recitation is directed at the living, not the dead. The surah's own declaration settles beyond dispute who its address is intended for. This is not a matter of interpretation — it is a straightforward

reading of the text itself.

Individual Responsibility: An-Najm 39 and Al-Baqarah 134

One of the most fundamental principles of Islamic ethics is that each person owns their own deeds. Surah An-Najm, verse 39, states:

> "And that there is not for man except that which he strives."

This verse expresses not merely a legal reality but an existential one. Every deed is the product of a person's own effort; it is not possible to receive a share of another's deeds. This principle does not negate social solidarity — rather, it makes it imperative that each individual personally assumes their own responsibility. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 134, extends this principle to a historical dimension:

> "That was a nation which has passed. They will have what they earned, and you will have what you have earned. You will not be asked about what they used to do."

The verse draws the moral boundary between generations. Whatever a past community did, that community will be held to account for it; those who come after are neither creditors nor debtors in that reckoning. Rituals performed externally on behalf of a deceased person attempt to cross this boundary on a spiritual level. Yet the verse makes clear that this boundary cannot be crossed.

Noah's Prayer: The Immutability of Divine Decree

The Quran illustrates through a concrete example that even supplication is not always effective. In Surah Hud, verse 46, the prayer of the Prophet Noah for his son is rejected:

> "He said, 'O Noah, indeed he is not of your family; indeed, he is one whose work was other than righteous, so ask Me not for that about which you have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant.'"

This example is profoundly significant. Noah is a prophet. His supplication was made with the purest of intentions, for his own child. Yet God rejected it. For each person's fate is shaped by their own choices and actions. Another's prayer is not an instrument capable of altering divine judgment. This event demonstrates that prayer is a sincere petition offered to God, but its outcome depends solely on God's will. The one who prays purifies their own inner state through the act — yet cannot reshape the destiny of the one who has died.

The Theological Distinction Between Prayer and Worship

The subtlest and most frequently confused dimension of this issue emerges here: the difference between praying for the dead and performing acts of worship on their behalf. Worship consists of acts that take a specific form and are recorded as deeds belonging to their performer — prayer, fasting, reciting the Quran. These deeds belong exclusively to the individual and cannot be transferred to another. Supplication, by contrast, is an appeal to God, a petition for mercy and forgiveness. Surah Al-Hashr, verse 10, conveys how believers make supplication for one another:

> "Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts any resentment toward those who have believed."

This verse shows that one may supplicate on behalf of past generations. However, such a supplication does not add new merit to the deceased's record of deeds. It is an act that keeps alive the suppliant's sense of compassion, their devotion to God, and their awareness of brotherhood. Its primary benefit is directed toward the one who prays; it does not alter the spiritual standing of the deceased. To overlook this distinction is to conflate supplication with worship. Yet the Quran draws a clear line between these two concepts.

The Psychological Origins and Theological Limits of Tradition

It would be unfair to claim that the tradition of reciting the Quran for the dead stems entirely from ill intent. This practice is largely fueled by feelings of love, longing, and helplessness. A person who has lost a loved one feels the need to do something for them, to remember them, and to maintain a connection with them. This feeling is humanly understandable and valuable. Yet the Quran counsels us to act in accordance with truth rather than our emotions. The desire to do good — born of love — must be channeled in the right direction. The way to enrich the life of the deceased was not to recite the Quran at their passing, but to treat them with kindness while they lived, to honor their rights, and to leave a meaningful mark on their life. Moreover, such practices carry the risk of gradually positioning the Quran as a mere instrument. The Quran is not a talisman, an energy source, or a symbolic message sent to the dead. It is a guide for guidance, revealed to illuminate the mind of its reader, to awaken the heart, and to order one's life.

The True Responsibility: The Duty That Falls on the Living

The Quran's message is directed not at the past or the dead, but at the present and the living. When a person dies, their deeds come to an end; their file is closed. The primary duty of those left behind is to live their own lives with this truth in view. Death is a powerful reminder. The passing of a person calls those who remain to mind their own death, the transience of this world, and the fact that every deed will be reckoned. Covering this reminder with ritual weakens death's capacity to teach. What truly matters is internalizing this reminder and transforming it into a personal effort to increase good in one's own life.

The truth that the Quran is a guide for the living — not the dead — must be recalled here, firmly and anew. The Quran's addressee is the living human being who reasons and reflects. It is established by the Quran's explicit declarations that each individual is responsible only for their own deeds and that it is not possible to receive a share of another's actions. Within this framework, acts such as reciting the Quran, performing prayers, or fasting on behalf of the dead neither benefit the deceased nor align with Islam's teaching.

Supplication, however, occupies a different place. Asking God for mercy and forgiveness on behalf of the dead is a humane and legitimate act for a believer. Yet this prayer does not alter the record of the deceased; it reflects the suppliant's

compassion and submission. Islam's call is clear: reason, reflect, do good while you live, and personally assume your own responsibility. No one bears another's burden; no one rises by another's deeds. Every soul will find the recompense of its own striving.

The Anatomy of a Historical Misconception: The Station of Individuality or Intrapersonal Intelligence?

Throughout human history, certain individuals have been placed in a special position within their societies on the grounds that they possessed an understanding, depth, and self-awareness beyond that of ordinary people. In the Islamic Sufi tradition, this position has been expressed through the concept of the "Station of Individuality" (Makam-ı Ferdiyet), and those thought to have reached this station were described as beings who had transcended their ego, could access truth directly, and occupied the pinnacle of the spiritual hierarchy. However, the new framework offered by modern psychology and cognitive science brings the question of what this concept actually describes back to the forefront. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, introduced in 1983, defined a domain of ability he called intrapersonal intelligence, placing within a scientific framework many of the characteristics that Sufi literature had treated for centuries as a mystical station. Here we will examine the structural similarities between the concept of the Station of Individuality and intrapersonal intelligence, assess the historical and theological background of this resemblance, and explore how this misconception has been reflected in the understanding of Islam.

The Station of Individuality: Origin and Content of the Concept

The concept of ferdiyyet derives from the Arabic root ferd, meaning "singular, unique, incomparable." Theologically, this attribute belongs to God alone; God is al-Ferd, the One who has no equal or likeness. Yet in Sufi literature, this concept was gradually transformed into a human station, giving rise to a spiritual degree called the "Station of Individuality" (makam-ı ferdiyet). The person said to have reached this station was depicted as someone who had fully come to know their ego, transcended selfhood, made direct contact with divine truth, and left behind the limitations of ordinary human consciousness.

The elements contained in this definition are noteworthy: a capacity for deep introspection, the ability to analyze oneself and one's emotions completely, intuitive acquisition of knowledge, a capacity for profound contemplation, and a natural orientation toward spiritual matters. But are these qualities truly the hallmarks of a mystical station — or has cognitive psychology defined them far earlier and far more precisely?

Intrapersonal Intelligence: Gardner's Definition and Scope

Within the framework of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Howard Gardner defines intrapersonal intelligence as follows: the ability to have a deep awareness and understanding of one's own inner world, emotions, strengths and weaknesses, motivations, and thought processes. Individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence

are people who can accurately read their own emotional states, clearly identify their long-term goals, resolve internal conflicts, possess developed intuitive reasoning, and engage with spiritual or philosophical questions with natural curiosity.

The degree to which these characteristics overlap with the qualities of the Station of Individuality is remarkably high. At their core, both describe the same human capacity: the ability to understand one's inner universe deeply and to transform that understanding into knowledge. The difference lies only in the framework within which the definition is made. One treats this capacity as a spiritual station; the other treats it as a cognitive ability.

Areas of Overlap: Structural Similarities Between the Concepts

1. Knowing One's Inner World and Knowledge of the Self (Nafs)

The principle frequently cited in Sufism — "He who knows himself knows his Lord" — summarizes the core dynamic of the Station of Individuality. To know the self (nafs) means to see one's pride, ambition, fears, desires, and attachments, and to move beyond them. This process requires an intensive practice of introspection. Intrapersonal intelligence defines precisely this capacity. An individual with high intrapersonal intelligence continuously observes their own motivations, biases, emotional patterns, and thought processes. This observation is not the product of a mystical ritual but the natural functioning of a cognitive ability. Consequently, what was once expressed as "knowing the self" is today called high intrapersonal intelligence.

2. Knowledge Through Inspiration and Intuitive Understanding

It has been claimed that individuals at the Station of Individuality could reach knowledge directly, grasping truth through inspiration without needing conventional channels of education. This claim was attributed throughout history to many great Sufi figures and was highlighted as the fundamental characteristic distinguishing them from ordinary people. From the perspective of cognitive science, however, this can be explained through a strong capacity for intuitive reasoning. Because individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence can make effective use of unconscious information-processing, they can sometimes arrive at correct conclusions without constructing an explicit chain of reasoning. This intuitive understanding is not a mystical source but a cognitive output arising from the combination of experience, deep reflection, and strong self-awareness.

3. Continuous Deep Contemplation and the State of Reflection

In the Sufi tradition, the person at the Station of Individuality is depicted as someone in a constant state of contemplation (tefekkür) and self-observation (murâkabe). For this person, introspection has ceased to be a method and has become an existential state. Individuals with developed intrapersonal intelligence exhibit precisely this pattern. They are naturally introverted, reflective, and oriented toward intellectual processes. They derive meaning from inner experience rather than external stimuli, and they engage far more intensely with spiritual and philosophical questions than

ordinary people do — a tendency that makes them appear extraordinary and different from those around them. Yet what is involved is simply the conspicuous manifestation of a particular form of intelligence.

A Theological Problem: "Ferdiyyet" Is an Attribute of God

At this point, a theological assessment is unavoidable. The attributes Ferd and Wahid are, in Islamic creed, names that belong to God alone, expressing His uniqueness and indivisibility. In Islam, these names used in this sense emphasize God's divinity and singularity. To say of any human being that they have "attained the Station of Individuality" contains a serious problem both linguistically and theologically. Such an expression amounts to attributing to a human being a quality that belongs exclusively to God, and this directly contradicts the Islamic principle of tawhid (monotheism/divine unity).

Furthermore, this concept has no basis whatsoever in the Quran. The Station of Individuality is not a Quranic concept but one produced by the Sufi tradition, which drew largely from Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and various mystical currents. The Quran invites human beings to confront their own selves, to reflect, and to turn toward God — but it does not define this process within a hierarchical system of stations.

Understanding the Quran and the Question of Institutional Education

The misconception created by the concept of the Station of Individuality has not remained confined to a mystical idea alone. It has brought with it a deep misunderstanding of how religious knowledge is to be acquired. The belief that certain individuals possess extraordinary spiritual capacities has laid the groundwork for the idea that religious knowledge is accessible only through specially privileged individuals or experts trained within institutional structures.

Yet the Quran repeatedly emphasizes its own intelligibility. The verse "And We have certainly made the Quran easy to remember. So is there anyone who will be mindful?" (Al-Qamar 54:17) expresses that the Quran is a clear and accessible guide. As a verbal and comprehension-based discipline, religion can be learned through personal effort and by reading the Quran directly. Indeed, many of the most important scholars in Islamic history attained a deep understanding of the Quran independently of institutional structures.

Hadiths, Schools of Law, and Quran-Centrism

The mystical hierarchy built around the Station of Individuality is also part of the cultural climate that nurtured the tendency to absolutize hadith and school-of-law (madhab) literature as sources of authority. Yet it must be noted that all hadiths were compiled after the death of our Prophet Muhammad, and that not all of them possess the same level of reliability — this is a fundamental principle of hadith methodology. Schools of law (madhabs) are human interpretations representing the juridical accumulation of particular periods and geographies; they are not binding. The authoritative source in Islam is the Quran. Other sources must be evaluated in

the light of the Quran and questioned to the extent that they conflict with it. When concepts like the Station of Individuality are passed through this filter, they are seen to be concepts that have no foundation in the Quran and were shaped over the course of history by various cultural and philosophical influences.

The Consequences of the Historical Misconception

In an era when types of intelligence were unknown, individuals with conspicuously high intrapersonal intelligence inevitably attracted attention. These were people who thought deeply, could confront themselves, possessed strong intuitive understanding, and were intensely preoccupied with spiritual questions. Communities lacking the tools to classify these characteristics naturally placed such individuals into a spiritual category.

This misconception produced several important consequences. First, a hierarchical understanding of religion took hold, according to which certain people attained extraordinary spiritual ranks. Second, this understanding made ordinary Muslims insecure in their own reading of the Quran and dependent on intermediaries. Third, attributes belonging to God were ascribed to human beings, generating theological errors. Fourth, the belief that religious knowledge must be acquired through particular institutions or special individuals was strengthened, and this weakened Islam's essentially direct understanding of divine address.

Conclusion

The concept of the Station of Individuality is, historically speaking, the product of the interpretation of individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence within the cultural and epistemological possibilities of their environment. Such individuals may indeed possess extraordinary self-awareness, intuitive depth, and contemplative capacity — but these qualities are the hallmarks not of a mystical station but of a set of cognitive abilities. Gardner's framework identifies this capacity as "intrapersonal intelligence" and treats it on the same plane as other forms of intelligence, as part of the ordinary diversity of human beings.

From a theological perspective, ferdiyyet is an attribute expressing God's uniqueness, and its attribution to human beings is problematic in both conceptual and creedal terms. The Quran defines no such system of stations, nor does it place religious knowledge under the monopoly of specially privileged individuals or institutions. For this reason, what must be done — both for individual religious understanding and for a correct grasp of Islam — is to set aside the hierarchies of mystical stations, to acknowledge that intrapersonal intelligence is a natural human capacity, and to restore the Quran to its central place as an intelligible and accessible guide with which every individual can engage directly. Understanding the misconceptions of the past is the prerequisite for building a healthier understanding of religion today.

The Concepts of Rasul and Nabi in the Quran: A Conceptual Analysis

The terms rasul and nabi are two fundamental concepts frequently encountered in the Quran's conceptual framework. In traditional translations, both are commonly

rendered as "prophet" or "messenger," with the subtle distinctions between them largely overlooked. Yet the Quran uses these two terms separately in specific contexts. Here we will examine both concepts from linguistic, semantic, and Quranic perspectives, attempt to clarify the differences between them, and explore their implications within Islam.

1. Nabi: The Bearer of News

The word nabi derives from the Arabic root naba (نَبَأ), which carries the meanings of "news," "important information," or "revealed message." A nabi is therefore someone who receives news from God through revelation and conveys it to people. The defining characteristic of a nabi is that he is the direct recipient of the divine message. The most prominent feature associated with the nabi in the Quran is receiving a book. This is explicitly stated in Surah Al-Baqarah 2:213:

> "Mankind was one community. Then God sent the nabis as bearers of good news and as warners, and with them He sent down the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters of their disputes."

This verse makes clear that the Book was sent down together with the nabis. Throughout the Quran, nabis are mentioned by names such as Moses, Jesus, Noah, Abraham, and Muhammad, and each is understood to have been given a divine book or body of revelation. In Surah Sad 38:67, the Quran itself is described as "great news," reinforcing the etymological link between the concept of nabi and "news."

2. Rasul: The Sent Messenger

The word rasul derives from the root r-s-l (ر-س-ل), meaning "to send gently" or "to direct." From the same root, irsal means to send, and risala means "a sent message" or "a communiqué." A rasul is, in short, "one sent with a mission," obligated to deliver the message completely and without alteration. The most striking aspect of the rasul concept is that it is not exclusive to human beings. The Quran explicitly states that rasuls are chosen from both humans and angels:

> "God chooses rasuls from among the angels and from among the people. Indeed, God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (Surah Al-Hajj 22:75)

In Surah Al-A'raf 7:37, the angels charged with taking souls are referred to as "Our rasuls." The angels who came to Lot are also described in the Quran as rasuls. These usages demonstrate that the concept of rasul is not related to receiving a book, but to taking on a mission and fulfilling it.

3. The Fundamental Differences Between Rasul and Nabi

In the traditional theological tradition — systematized especially by the Ash'ari school and adopted and disseminated by scholars such as Azizuddin al-Nasafi and Ibn Taymiyyah — a rasul is one who receives a book, while a nabi is one who does not. This definition has been accepted as the dominant understanding in Islamic thought for centuries and continues to be embraced by the majority today. However, when the Quran's own internal consistency is examined, this definition is seen to contain

serious problems. While Surah Al-Baqarah 2:213 explicitly states that the Book was sent down with the nabis, the tradition's claim that nabis are not given books directly contradicts the Quran's own text. Furthermore, given the verses in which angels are described as rasuls, the thesis that every rasul must receive a book is groundless — for the Quran contains no statement indicating that angels charged with taking souls were given a book.

A holistic reading of the Quran yields the following conclusion: a nabi is one who receives direct revelation and a book from God. All nabis are simultaneously rasuls, since they are tasked with conveying the messages they receive to the people. However, not every rasul is a nabi. Rasuls who are not nabis are persons who convey and transmit to society the book brought by previous nabis. The three rasuls sent to a town in Surah Ya-Sin illustrate this:

> "We sent to them two, but they denied them; so We reinforced them with a third. They said: 'Indeed, we are rasuls sent to you.'" (Ya-Sin 36:14)

The fact that these three rasuls were sent to the same community at the same time, with no mention in the Quran of any new book being revealed, strongly supports the conclusion that being a rasul does not require receiving a book.

4. A Critical View of the Equation of Rasul with the Book

Particularly in certain contemporary translations and commentaries, an equation of the form "Rasul = Book" can be observed. This approach is linguistically unfounded. In Arabic, rasul (رَسُول) denotes a willful, rational being who has been sent, while kitab (كِتَاب) refers to a written text and derives from an entirely different root, k-t-b (ك-ت-ب). Even between risala (رِسَالَة) and rasul (رَسُول) — both from the same root r-s-l — there is a difference in meaning; equating rasul with kitab, which has no etymological relationship whatsoever, is an error from both a grammatical and a Quranic studies standpoint.

In this context, it is notable that certain quotations from al-Raghib al-Isfahani's al-Mufradat appear to be taken out of context. The phrase in that work — "sometimes used for the pledge a person takes upon himself" — indicates that speech acquires the quality of risala only when undertaken by someone; it does not directly mean "rasul = book." A book is an inanimate, irrational object. It does not interact with society. All of the attributes the Quran uses to describe its rasuls — bashir (bearer of good news), nadhir (warner), mu'allim (teacher), and yuzakki (purifier) — express an active and interactive mission. This is a responsibility that can only be carried by a living, thinking, and acting human being or angel — not by a book. The book is the instrument through which the rasul fulfills his mission; it is not the mission itself.

5. The Relationship of "Prophet" and "Messenger" to Quranic Terminology

The word peygamber, widely used in Turkish Islamic literature, is of Persian origin, composed of peygam (message) and ber (bearer). Though semantically close to the Arabic nabi, this word does not appear in the Quranic text. Similarly, the Turkish word elçi (messenger/envoy) is a native Turkish equivalent that does not fully reflect the

Quran's original terminology. The most significant problem caused by these translation choices is that the conceptual distinction between rasul and nabi becomes invisible to the Turkish-speaking reader. Reading the Quran within its own terminology and understanding these terms in their original language is essential for a correct grasp of the text.

6. On the Verses "Obey God and His Messenger"

The frequently recurring expression "Obey God and His Messenger" (e.g., An-Nisa 4:59, 80) has at times been presented by sectarian interpretations as evidence that religion rests on two separate authorities. According to this view, obedience to the messenger requires compliance not only with the Quran but also with the hadith corpus. However, when the Quran's own internal coherence is examined, this approach loses its footing. Surah An-Nisa 4:80 states:

> "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God."

This verse declares that obedience to the messenger is counted as direct obedience to God. The messenger's role is to convey to people the message he has received from God; the authority to determine the source and content of that message belongs to God, not to the messenger. Obedience to the messenger therefore means compliance not with his personal opinions or judgments outside of revelation, but with the divine message he transmitted — namely, the Quran. Surah Al-An'am 6:114 contains the following statement:

> "Shall I seek other than God as a judge, when it is He who has sent down to you the Book fully detailed?"

Here, in the voice of the Prophet Muhammad, the pointlessness of seeking another authority when the Book has already been made clear is expressed. This is a concise articulation of the Quran's fundamental position on religious authority: judgment belongs to God alone, and the Book He has revealed is sufficient. The command in Surah An-Nisa 4:59 to "refer disputes to God and the Messenger" must also be understood within this framework. Since the Messenger is no longer among us, this verse instructs that disputes should be resolved through God's Book — for what the Messenger conveyed to the community is contained within the Quran itself.

The concepts of rasul and nabi in the Quran, while closely related, contain clear differences in terms of function, authority, and context. A nabi is one who receives direct revelation and a book from God; a rasul is a person or being who takes on a mission and conveys the message to people. Every nabi is simultaneously a rasul, but not every rasul is a nabi. The traditional theological tradition's reversal of this distinction contradicts the Quran's own internal consistency — particularly Surah Al-Baqarah 2:213. The attempt to equate the rasul with a book is linguistically and semantically baseless. A rasul is not an inanimate object; he is a living being who knows his mission, embodies his message, and interacts with society. The Book is the divine trust he carries — not the messenger himself, but the burden upon the messenger's shoulders. Finally, interpreting the expressions "obey God and His Messenger" as legitimizing a second source of authority in religion contradicts the

Quran's foundational principle that divine revelation alone — God's own word — is the sole source. Obedience to the messenger means compliance with the message he conveyed: the Quran. Grasping this distinction correctly is an indispensable condition for reading the Quran soundly, overcoming conceptual deviations, and grounding religion solely in divine revelation.

The Concept of Right and the Matter of Human Rights: A Quran-Centered Analysis

Among the most exploited concepts in Islamic history is undoubtedly "haqq" (right/truth). Haqq refers to that which is established in existence, whose denial is impossible, which expresses absolute reality, and which is brought into being with wisdom. It is also one of the names and attributes of Allah. However, over the centuries, through the interpretations of madhhab imams, hadith literature, and the mythological accumulation of Middle Eastern culture, this concept has been distanced from its original meaning and reduced to a hollowed-out shell. This piece examines the original Quranic meaning of the concept of haqq, the position of the "human rights" (kul hakkı) discourse in relation to the Quran, and how the traditionalist understanding of religion has distorted this concept.

The Source of Right: Allah Alone

According to the Quran, right is grounded not in human interpretation, cultural habit, or tradition, but solely in what Allah has communicated through revelation. Allah alone is the owner of immutable truths and universal values. Even the angels expressed this reality directly: "Glory be to You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." (Al-Baqarah 2:32)

This verse establishes a profoundly decisive principle: knowledge is only sound when taught by Allah. Every definition of "right" that humans construct through their own reasoning, tradition, or cultural accumulation drifts toward falsehood to the extent that it departs from this principle. Indeed, verse 53 of Surah An-Nahl declares: "Whatever blessing you have is from Allah." This verse encompasses not only material blessings but also knowledge of truth, the capacity for moral judgment, and the understanding of justice. Therefore, attempting to define the content of right independently of revelation amounts to claiming a share in Allah's absolute ownership.

To Whom Does the Authority to Forgive Sin Belong?

In the traditional religious understanding, the concept of kul hakkı (human right/interpersonal right) has evolved into a belief that ties the forgiveness of a wrong committed by one person against another — in the afterlife — to the victim's consent. While this belief appears on the surface to contain a sense of moral accountability, it directly contradicts the Quran's principle of tawhid (monotheism). The Quran issues a clear ruling on this matter: "And who can forgive sins other than Allah?" (Āl-Imrān 3:135) This question is rhetorically a negation; its answer is unambiguous: no one. The authority to forgive sins belongs to Allah alone. Verse 26 of Surah Al-Kahf reinforces this principle: "He does not allow anyone to share in His judgment."

When these two verses are read together, the picture that emerges is this: Judgment and forgiveness are two exclusive prerogatives belonging to Allah, and transferring any portion of these prerogatives to a human being, a sheikh, or a social convention undermines the principle of tawhid.

An important distinction must be made here. For people to forgive one another is a legitimate and virtuous act in the realm of human relations. One may forgive someone who has wronged them — this is a mark of moral maturity. However, it is a foundational Quranic principle that such human forgiveness does not guarantee the erasure of sin before Allah, and that the forgiveness of sin is bound exclusively to Allah's will. A servant's forgiveness does not replace Allah's forgiveness; one belongs to the domain of worldly relations, the other to the domain of otherworldly reckoning.

The Place of the "Human Right" Discourse in the Quran

The concept of kul hakkı does not appear in any verse of the Quran. This observation carries a critical clue about the essence of the matter. The Quran has imposed legal and moral obligations upon people toward one another; however, it has not granted the victim the authority to forgive the sin arising from the violation of those obligations.

Take theft as an example. If someone commits theft, two distinct dimensions come into play. The first is worldly: the law catches the offender, the court rules justly, a prison or compensation sentence is issued. This dimension is governed by state authority founded on Allah's laws. The second dimension is otherworldly: the thief has transgressed a boundary that Allah has prohibited. The only one who will forgive this sin is Allah. When public property is stolen, all members of society saying "we forgive our right" may be a moral stance — but this statement is not a sufficient or decisive condition for the forgiveness of the sin before Allah. Allah forgives if He wills, and withholds forgiveness if He wills. This is a requirement of His absolute will.

The same logic applies to backbiting, slander, and verbal abuse. For a person who has been gossiped about or slandered to say "I do not forgive my right" is a human and understandable response. However, to claim that this response determines whether the sin will be forgiven opens the door to an understanding that transfers afterlife judgment to human will. The sentence "I do not forgive my right" is unproblematic as long as it remains a human expression of emotion. But when it is transformed into a theological ruling — "therefore Allah will not forgive either" — it transgresses the boundaries of the Quran.

Re-Reading the Matter of Parental Right

One of the most common manifestations of the traditionalist understanding is the concept of parental right (anne-baba hakkı). This concept creates the impression that parents hold a divine-level proprietary right over their children. Yet the Quran places this matter on a different axis.

The Quran commands that parents be treated with kindness and respect, and that one not even say "uff" (a word of contempt) to them. However, the basis for these

commands is not that parents hold absolute rights over their children, but that Allah has commanded this behavior. The source of obedience and respect is Allah's command, not the parents themselves. Though this distinction may appear to be a subtle nuance, it is theologically decisive. Indeed, verse 15 of Surah Luqman clearly states that if parents invite their child to shirk (associating partners with Allah), they are not to be obeyed. This verse demonstrates that a parent's authority over their child is not unconditional and absolute. The source of authority is Allah; a parent is in a position worthy of respect and obedience insofar as they comply with Allah's rulings — otherwise, that position loses its validity.

The Understanding of Existence and the Matter of the Absolute Agent

One dimension of the Quranic understanding of tawhid relates to the philosophy of existence. The human being, as a soul created by Allah, observes in this world the scenes that Allah has destined. Behind events lies an unseen reality, and it is Allah alone who creates and governs this reality. For this reason, no one can truly intervene in another's life, fate, sin, or reward. The absolute agent behind visible actions is Allah.

Proceeding from this principle, the meaning of the verse "Whatever blessing you have is from Allah" deepens. If a person is benefiting you, Allah is delivering that benefit to you through that servant as an intermediary. The true source of benefit or harm is not the visible means, but Allah's will. To argue otherwise — that is, to claim that one person can provide benefit or harm to another independently of Allah — contradicts the Quranic principle of tawhid. Al-Wahid is one of Allah's names: it means the One who is singular in His essence, having no partner, equal, or likeness in His attributes, acts, or judgments.

The Position of Sheikhs' and Saints' Claims Against the Quran

Certain beliefs widespread in the Sufi tradition directly contradict the principles established above. Claims made by sheikhs and those described as "awliya" (saints) — such as "I will intercede for you," "I will have your sins forgiven," or "I will take you to paradise" — are incompatible with the Quranic principle that reserves the authority to forgive sins exclusively to Allah. Such claims rest on the delusion that a portion of Allah's exclusive prerogatives has been delegated to humans — a delusion that constitutes a violation of the principle of tawhid. Verse 26 of Surah Al-Kahf draws an unequivocal boundary on this matter: "He does not allow anyone to share in His judgment." Stories of karamat (miraculous deeds attributed to saints) and intercession narratives, to the extent that they transgress the limits of this verse, lay the groundwork for a belief that contradicts the Quran. The crux of the matter lies in the error of a person presenting their spiritual authority as an extension of Allah's prerogatives.

The Systemic Consequences of the Traditionalist Understanding

The detachment of the concept of right from revelation, and the incorporation into religious discourse of concepts like kul hakkı that have no foundation in the Quran, yields concrete and observable consequences. When the traditionalist religious understanding derives the content of right not from Quranic revelation but from

madhhab interpretations, hadith literature, and cultural accumulation, the result is an inconsistent and contradictory belief system. Within this system, the sheikh attempts to take Allah's place with the claim "I will have your sins forgiven." The traditionalist ulema claim ownership of religion with the principle "Right is only what our madhhab says." The politician carries religion into a domain of legitimacy by declaring "Truth is what I say it is." All three figures commit the same error in different forms: they appropriate for themselves a prerogative that belongs exclusively to Allah.

The backdrop of the political and social collapse in the Middle Eastern geography lies in this very understanding. In societies governed by those who define right according to their own whims, the establishment of justice is impossible — because the standard of justice is not universal but shaped by the interests of those in power.

The principles the Quran sets forth are clear and consistent: The authority to forgive sin belongs to Allah alone. The authority to issue judgment belongs to Allah alone. Right consists solely of what Allah has communicated through revelation. The concept of kul hakkı does not appear in the Quran; people have legal and moral obligations toward one another, but the forgiveness of the sin arising from the violation of those obligations is not contingent upon human approval. Respect for parents is fulfilled because Allah has commanded it — not because parents hold absolute proprietary rights over their children. The intercession claims of sheikhs, the miracle narratives attributed to saints, and the kul hakkı discourse of the traditionalist religious understanding find no ground to stand on before the Quranic principle of tawhid.

Those who nullify right and replace it with tradition deny Allah's name Al-Wahid — most often without even being aware of it. Yet right is one, and it is Allah. No matter how widespread falsehood becomes, the truth does not change: Judgment and forgiveness belong to Allah alone.

The Mythological Roots of the Khidr Figure and Its Influence on Islam

The figure of Khidr is one of the most fascinating and controversial characters in Islamic thought, particularly within the Sufi tradition. The attributes ascribed to him — immortality, ladunni knowledge, and aid from the unseen — have sat at the center of folk beliefs, mystical teachings, and religious discourse for centuries. Yet a careful examination of this figure reveals that it draws not from the foundational sources of Islam, but from far older Mesopotamian, Persian, Judeo-Christian, and Hellenistic traditions. This essay systematically addresses the mythological roots of Khidr, how he was incorporated into Islam, the Quran's stance on the matter, and the religious problems this figure generates.

The Mythological Roots of Khidr

Mesopotamian and Persian Tradition

The earliest traces of the Khidr figure can be found in Mesopotamian mythology. Utnapishtim, who appears in the Sumerian and Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, is portrayed as a sage who survived the great flood and was rewarded with immortality.

Gilgamesh's appeal to him in his quest for immortality bears a striking resemblance to the pattern by which Khidr is associated with wisdom and eternal life. In Persian culture, sacred figures connected to the haoma plant were linked to the elixir of immortality, and this symbolism gradually merged into various cultural pools. The tradition that Khidr drank the ab-i hayat — the water of life — is clearly connected to this cultural accumulation.

Judeo-Christian Tradition

In Jewish tradition, the Prophet Elijah is believed to have ascended to heaven without dying. This event is recounted in 2 Kings 2:11:

"As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind."

This narrative served as an important source in shaping Islamic traditions regarding Khidr's immortality. In some traditions, Khidr and Elijah are even identified with one another, or it is believed that the two meet once a year — a concrete reflection of this cultural intersection. The festival of Hıdırellez is a social manifestation of this belief. In Christianity, the miraculous powers attributed to saints — prophecy, healing, and other mystical qualities — overlap structurally with the functions of Khidr. Particularly in Eastern Christianity, beliefs that saints appear to people and offer assistance are structurally analogous to Khidr's role.

Ancient Greek and Hellenistic Thought

Hermes Trismegistus is a Hellenistic figure identified with wisdom, guidance, and occult sciences. His name, meaning "thrice-great Hermes," symbolizes a mediating role that conveys divine wisdom to the human plane — which is precisely Khidr's function in Sufism: an invisible guide who transmits divine knowledge to chosen individuals. Furthermore, Khidr's association with water and his presentation as a source of fertility and life reveals his symbolic kinship with the river and sea deities of ancient cultures.

The Process of Incorporation into Islam

Khidr's entry into Islamic thought was not sudden or direct, but gradual, occurring through cultural interactions. Various traditions about Khidr's identity and attributes circulated among early Muslims, and these traditions began to take on a more systematic form during the cultural synthesis that accelerated in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. The intellectually vibrant atmosphere of the Abbasid era provided fertile ground for Greek philosophy, Iranian traditions, and various mystical teachings to converge with Islamic thought. In this environment, Khidr was elevated to a far more central position as the Sufi tradition took shape. Sufism constructed Khidr as a wise, immortal, and saintly figure who receives knowledge directly from God — sometimes appearing to ordinary people, sometimes guiding distinguished masters. This figure became increasingly prominent in Sufi literature, the tradition of manaqib (hagiography), and popular culture. During the Ottoman period, belief in Khidr

permeated the depths of social life; he came to be regarded as the protector of sailors, travelers, and those in distress.

Analysis of the Concept of Ladunni Knowledge

The concept of ladunni knowledge, directly associated with the Khidr figure, constitutes perhaps the most critical point of this discussion. According to this concept, Khidr possesses a secret knowledge received directly from God, far beyond the comprehension of ordinary people. However, when we examine the Quranic basis of this concept, we encounter a serious problem. In the Quran, the expression ladun or ladunna is not used as the name of a branch of knowledge, but as an adverb meaning "from our side," "from our presence," or "from us." In Surah Al-Kahf, verse 65, it is stated: "And they found one of Our servants upon whom We had bestowed mercy from Us and had taught him knowledge from Our presence." The phrase min ladunna here is an adverb indicating the source of the knowledge — not a technical term defining an independent category of knowledge. Yet over time this grammatical nuance was either overlooked or deliberately bypassed, and an artificial category of knowledge was constructed under the name ladunni ilm. Through this artificial category, Khidr was elevated as a figure who transcends ordinary human limits and has access to divine secrets.

The Narrative of Surah Al-Kahf

The name "Khidr" does not appear directly in the Quran. The person Moses encounters in the narrative spanning verses 60–82 of Surah Al-Kahf is described only as "a righteous servant." The identification of this person as Khidr is an association subsequently produced by commentators and hadith literature. This interpretation, which became canonical through transmitted reports, eventually came to be perceived as though it were an explicit statement of the Quran itself. The content of the narrative is also instructive upon careful reading: the wise servant performs certain actions that Moses cannot understand, and ultimately explains the wisdom behind them. What the narrative emphasizes is that divine wisdom can transcend human comprehension. However, constructing from this narrative a figure who is immortal, omnipresent, and an unseen helper is the product of an interpretive practice that goes far beyond the text.

The Quran's Clear Ruling on Immortality

The most fundamental problem with the belief in Khidr is that it conflicts with the Quran's clear and universal statements on the subject of death. Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 34, states: "And We did not grant immortality to any human being before you. So if you die, would they be immortal?" This verse is unequivocal: immortality has not been granted to any human being, and this principle applies to all people, including the prophets. The claims that Khidr is still alive, that he appears to people to help them, and that he is an immortal being are therefore in direct conflict with this verse. In some traditions, Khidr is evaluated alongside Elijah and associated with the ascension of Elijah in Jewish tradition. However, the biblical narrative in fact describes Elijah's death in a whirlwind. Consequently, a belief in immortality cannot be introduced into Islam on the basis of this narrative.

Psychological and Sociological Dimensions

The Khidr experience can also be evaluated from the perspective of individual psychology. It is known that individuals with schizotypal personality structures may experience perceptual disturbances in which they believe they are communicating with supernatural figures. These individuals feel such experiences as real, and they are subjectively highly meaningful and convincing. This does not, however, mean that such experiences objectively occurred. The fact that many mystic figures throughout history have reported "seeing Khidr" or receiving knowledge from him is a concrete illustration of how this psychological mechanism operates within cultural and religious contexts. From a sociological standpoint, belief in Khidr can be interpreted as a coping mechanism produced by societies in moments of uncertainty and helplessness. The practice of "calling upon Khidr" in times of distress served as an apparent exit from seemingly insoluble situations — a psychological foothold. While it can be said that Khidr beliefs are understandable in the context of social psychology, this intelligibility does not confer Islamic legitimacy upon the belief.

Assessment from the Perspective of Tawhid

Islam's most fundamental principle, tawhid, teaches the oneness of God and that help and prayer must be directed to Him alone. Qualities such as answering calls from the unseen, being omnipresent, and being aware of people's circumstances are, in Islam, attributes that belong exclusively to God. Attributing these qualities to Khidr constitutes a risk of shirk (associating partners with God) at the level of divine attributes. Imagining Khidr as a figure who "arrives when called upon" and "rushes to the aid of those in distress" means directing worship and intercession to one other than God — a situation that contradicts in the clearest terms the framework within which the Quran defines worship.

Conclusion

The Khidr figure is not unique to Islam in its origins; it is the reflection in Islamic culture of a deep mythological heritage stretching from the immortal sages of Mesopotamia to the sacred figures of Persia, from the heaven-ascending prophets of Jewish tradition to the mysterious guides of Hellenistic thought. The incorporation of this figure into Islamic thought is the joint product of early cultural interactions, the Sufi tradition, and folk beliefs. The Quran neither explicitly mentions the name Khidr nor attributes immortality to any human being. The concept known as ladunni knowledge is an artificial category produced by severing a Quranic term from its grammatical context. Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 34, resolves this debate sharply from its primary source: no human being has been granted immortality. Khidr never existed. In light of all this evidence, accepting Khidr as an immortal, omnipresent figure who provides aid from the unseen is in conflict with Islam's foundational beliefs and with the clear statements of the Quran. These beliefs are not drawn from the essence of Islam, but are superstitions nourished by the mythological accumulation of ancient cultures and grafted onto religious discourse over time. Purifying Islam from such elements is among the requirements of a genuine return to the Quran and the principle of tawhid.

Bequest in Islamic Law: A Legal and Moral Obligation in the Light of the Quran

Bequest is one of the most deep-rooted legal institutions in human history — a fundamental arrangement that determines how an individual's assets will be distributed after death and contributes to the preservation of social order. Islamic law treats this institution not merely as an inheritance technique, but as a guarantor of justice, peace, and social harmony, imbuing it with profound moral significance. Numerous verses of the Holy Quran contain explicit rulings on bequest, presenting it as both an individual responsibility and a social necessity.

In its literal sense, bequest means a person's declaration, before death, of their wishes to be carried out after they die. From the perspective of Islamic law, it is a legal instruction given by a person — whether in good health or during illness — regarding all or part of their estate, to be executed after their death. In Islam, bequest is far more than a tool for distributing assets; it is a multi-layered institution that preserves the internal order of society, prevents potential conflicts among heirs, and safeguards the rights of every individual. This obligation is explicitly stated in verse 180 of Surah Al-Baqarah:

> "It is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you and he leaves wealth, to make a bequest for parents and near relatives in a fair manner — a duty upon the righteous." (Al-Baqarah, 180)

This verse makes clear that bequest is not an incidental act but a right and responsibility that believers are obliged to fulfill. The phrase "a duty upon the righteous" lifts bequest beyond a purely legal transaction and connects it to piety and devoutness, presenting it as a requirement of being a conscious believer.

The Alteration of Bequest and the Moral Dimension of Sin

The Quran does not merely command that a bequest be made; it also explicitly stipulates that the bequest must be protected and must not be altered by third parties. Verse 181 of Surah Al-Baqarah addresses this as follows:

> "But whoever changes it after he has heard it — the sin is only upon those who change it." (Al-Baqarah, 181)

While this ruling safeguards the integrity of bequest, it simultaneously functions as a conscious mechanism of deterrence. In Islamic law, altering a bequest is not merely a legal violation; it is an act that gives rise to serious moral and religious accountability. The falsification or disregard of a bequest is not only a disrespect toward the deceased's will, but also a grave abuse that can lead to injustice, dispute, and at times deep social fractures among the surviving heirs. In this context, the verse implicitly warns not only the person who alters the bequest, but also anyone who becomes party to — or remains silent in the face of — such an alteration. Islam's understanding of justice requires not passive neutrality, but an active sense of responsibility.

The Framework of Inheritance Distribution: The Rulings of Surah An-Nisa

The most comprehensive Quranic source on the matter of inheritance and bequest in Islamic law is Surah An-Nisa. Verses 11 and 12 specify in considerable detail who inherits what share, presenting these determinations as a divine arrangement:

> "Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females... These are the limits set by Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise." (An-Nisa, 11–12)

The significance of these verses can be assessed from several angles.

First, the divine guarantee of shares: The fact that inheritance ratios are determined by Allah Himself renders these rulings immune to individual preference or social pressure. This is a foundational protective mechanism that prevents the powerful from usurping the rights of the weak.

Second, debt and bequest taking precedence over inheritance: The verses specifically emphasize that the distribution of inheritance takes place only after the deceased's debts and valid bequests have been settled. This arrangement demonstrates that fulfilling the deceased's worldly obligations takes priority over the interests of the heirs, revealing that death is not an escape from responsibility but a transfer of it.

Third, detailed share calculations: The ratios prescribed for various categories of heirs — spouse, mother, father, children, and siblings (one-half, one-quarter, one-eighth, one-third, one-sixth) — draw an exceptionally comprehensive framework. This level of detail ensures that every individual's right is protected with mathematical precision.

The Principle of Non-Injurious Bequest

The expression found at the end of verse 12 of Surah An-Nisa — "a bequest from Allah that causes no harm" — succinctly encapsulates the ethical foundation of Islam's understanding of bequest. This phrase commands that a bequest must not become an instrument of harm, either in its content or its application. What, then, constitutes a harmful bequest? Chief among such cases are: the violation of the legitimate shares of some heirs through excessive favoritism toward others; collusive bequests designed to cause loss to creditors; and arrangements that deliberately sow the seeds of conflict among heirs. This ruling also makes clear what the essence of bequest truly is: a bequest should be the just legacy a person leaves behind upon departing this world — it must not become a source of discord rather than peace, or of conflict rather than solidarity. Accordingly, Islam has not left bequest entirely to individual will, but has shaped it within the bounds of moral and social constraints.

Witnessing: The Foundation of Bequest's Reliability

Islamic law requires not only that a bequest be properly made, but also that its validity be demonstrable. In this context, the institution of witnessing emerges as the primary means of placing a bequest on solid legal ground. Verse 106 of Surah Al-Ma'idah introduces a remarkably detailed regulation on this matter:

> "O you who have believed, testimony between you when death approaches one of you — at the time of bequest — shall be two just men from among you or two others from outside if you are traveling through the land and the calamity of death befalls you..." (Al-Ma'idah, 106)

This verse contains several important legal principles. First and foremost, the requirement that witnesses be "just" persons invalidates testimony that is arbitrary or of questionable reliability. Justice here is not confined to personal honesty; it also encompasses the witness's social standing, moral integrity, and an objective stance with respect to the matter at hand. Furthermore, the verse makes witnessing obligatory even under extraordinary circumstances such as travel. This arrangement demonstrates that bequest is not a mere formality, but requires institutional safeguards to ensure it is genuinely carried out. Witnessing is the armor with which a bequest is protected against future disputes.

The Wholeness of Bequest's Legal and Moral Dimensions

Islam addresses the institution of bequest as a holistic structure, encompassing both its legal and moral dimensions. This wholeness manifests on three fundamental levels.

On the individual level, bequest is a religious responsibility that a person must fulfill before death. Dying without a bequest has been regarded in Islam as a discouraged and even reproachable state.

On the family level, bequest ensures that the transfer of rights across generations takes place on a fair and transparent basis. Particularly in large family structures, the absence or ambiguity of a bequest can lead to deep ruptures among heirs and can corrode bonds of trust. Bequest eliminates this risk.

On the social level, bequest takes on the function of preventing wealth from accumulating in particular hands and facilitating its distribution across different segments of society. The detailed share calculations in Surah An-Nisa place this distribution of wealth within a systematic framework.

In Islamic law, bequest is far more than a technical inheritance document of the kind found in the legal histories of many societies; it is a comprehensive system of justice. When the Quranic rulings on this subject are assessed as a whole, it becomes clear that bequest is shaped around four fundamental principles: the obligation to make a bequest, the protection and non-alteration of the bequest, the just distribution of inheritance shares under divine guarantee, and the grounding of bequest in reliable witnesses. These principles simultaneously protect individual rights, intra-familial balances, and social peace.

In Islam, bequest is not merely a declaration of final intent; it is a testament that a person has fulfilled their last responsibility toward the world and has protected the rights of those left behind. The Quran's clear and detailed rulings on this matter constitute one of the most powerful proofs that Islamic civilization has regarded justice not merely as a value, but as an imperative to be realized through concrete

and operational mechanisms.

The Hasty Nature of Humans and Islam's Teaching of Patience

Human beings are, by nature, impatient creatures. Throughout history, philosophers, psychologists, and religious scholars have examined this reality from different angles, revealing how the pursuit of instant gratification can lead people toward flawed decisions. Islam identified this human truth centuries ago in the Quran and presented patience as one of the most fundamental moral virtues in response. This dialogue between humanity's hasty disposition and the balanced, patient way of life envisioned by Islam remains relevant today, offering profound self-awareness to all people.

The Quran describes human psychology with remarkable accuracy. In verse 11 of Surah Al-Isra, this truth is expressed strikingly: "Man prays for evil as he prays for good, and man is ever hasty." This verse is not merely an observation — it carries the weight of a deep warning. What stands out is the emphasis that a person can just as easily pray for harm as for good. How is this possible? The answer lies in haste itself. Without fully seeing the outcome of a situation, relying only on momentary feelings and quick judgments, a person rushes to a decision. Someone who curses in anger, makes wrong choices out of impatience, or insists that something happen immediately may unknowingly be acting against their own interests. This reveals the limitations of human perception. A person can see today, but cannot fully grasp tomorrow, the day after, or the long-term consequences of their actions. Haste deepens this blindness. When a quick decision is combined with a narrow perspective, the result is a person chasing things that are not truly in their best interest.

The Harm Haste Does to a Person

The consequences of haste do not remain at the individual level alone — they negatively affect family life, social relationships, and even a person's connection with God. A hasty person easily vents their anger and says things they will later regret. A hasty person abandons or begins a relationship or endeavor without adequate reflection. A hasty person, when their prayer goes unanswered, begins to question their trust in God. Yet the workings of life are not simple enough to be understood through momentary assessments. An illness may ultimately make a person stronger. A lost job may open far greater doors. A delayed marriage may lay the groundwork for a healthier union. All of these possibilities are part of a divine plan — unknown to the human but known to God. This is precisely where the danger of haste becomes clear: with their limited sight, a person risks rejecting the divine plan.

Not Hastening Toward Evil: The Lesson of Surah An-Naml

Surah An-Naml, verse 46, offers a different but complementary dimension: "O my people! Why do you hasten toward evil rather than good? Why do you not seek God's forgiveness, so that you may receive mercy?" This verse relays the words of the Prophet Salih to his people, yet its universal message speaks to all of humanity. It clearly reveals a deeply rooted human tendency: people rush toward wrongdoing,

toward error and rebellion, yet they delay repentance, goodness, and turning back. In a moment of anger, a person quickly makes a harmful decision; but repairing the damage that decision causes may take years — or may never happen at all. Harming someone occurs in an instant; offering an apology is postponed indefinitely. This inverse proportion is not only a moral weakness but also a manifestation of haste. In moments of wrongdoing, the intensity of emotion drives quick action, while goodness, requiring patience and repentance, tends to be deferred. Yet God's mercy offers an open door at every moment. To enter through it requires setting aside pride, listening to wisdom rather than impulse, and turning sincerely toward God.

Patience: The Strongest Shield Against Haste

Islam's proposed remedy for haste centers largely on patience. The concept of patience (sabr) appears in over a hundred verses of the Quran and is repeatedly counted among the greatest virtues — a frequency that clearly demonstrates its central place in Islamic ethics. Contrary to common belief, patience is not passive waiting. It is a conscious stance, a choice requiring willpower, and a concrete expression of deep trust in God. A patient person does not helplessly accept circumstances; rather, they know how to read those circumstances correctly, do not panic, avoid hasty mistakes, and reserve final judgment for the right moment. In this sense, patience is also a form of strategic reasoning. Great decisions are made not in haste but with a mature mind. Deep wounds heal not quickly but with time and effort. Strong relationships are built not in a rush but through patience and understanding. At its core, Islam's teaching on patience says this to the human being: You do not govern time; God, who knows time best, does. Trust in Him and do not rush.

Tawakkul — Reliance on God: The Antidote to Haste

Tawakkul, a concept directly connected to patience, is the complementary element of the spiritual remedy Islam offers against haste. It means that after doing what is within one's power, a person entrusts the outcome to God. This awareness profoundly transforms the impulse to rush. The most fundamental psychological driver of haste is the fear of losing control. Unable to tolerate uncertainty, a person desires to reach a conclusion quickly. But tawakkul means genuinely surrendering that control to God — and finding true peace in doing so. A person who understands they do not need to be in control can no longer find justification for acting hastily, because they sincerely accept that no amount of rushing can outpace divine providence. The psychological benefit of this acceptance is immense. Anxiety diminishes, anger softens, relationships settle onto healthier ground, and a person begins to evaluate life's events from a much broader perspective.

Accepting Mistakes and Repentance: A Sign of Maturity

The hasty nature of the human being sometimes leads to mistakes. This is inevitable. The real question is what attitude a person adopts after the mistake is made. This is precisely what verse 46 of Surah An-Naml points to: when wrong has been done, when haste has led to harm, the proper response is to seek God's forgiveness. In Islam, repentance (tawbah) is not a sign of weakness — on the contrary, it is the

strongest evidence of maturity and spiritual awakening. A person who can see their mistake, acknowledge it, and take a sincere step toward correction is someone who understands their own limitations and grows through that understanding. God's mercy is always ready to receive such a return. This process — the very opposite of haste — requires slowing down, turning inward, holding oneself accountable, and then taking the right step. Though it may seem arduous, it is the path that leads a person to the healthiest outcome in both this life and the next.

The hasty nature of the human being is identified in the Quran, and upon that identification a comprehensive system of ethics and belief has been built. The message of Al-Isra in revealing humanity's tendency toward haste, and the call of An-Naml not to rush toward evil, continue to guide people as two mutually completing divine messages. Islam's message on this matter is clear and coherent: human beings are inclined toward haste, but this inclination is a characteristic that can be changed. Patience, reliance on God, and repentance are the three essential tools of that change. Patience slows a person down and prompts reflection. Reliance on God connects a person to the Divine and frees them from anxiety. Repentance liberates a person from the captivity of their mistakes and gives them the strength to begin again.

In conclusion, being hasty is a human but surmountable weakness. Islam does not ignore this weakness; it acknowledges it, gives it meaning, and offers a path by which it can be overcome. That path is called patience — and its strength is drawn from a deep and unshakeable trust in God.

Harut and Marut in the Context of Quran 2:102: A Linguistic and Conceptual Analysis

The concept of angels in the Quran forms one of the most deeply rooted and established elements of Islam. According to traditional theological understanding, angels are beings that fully obey God, carry out His commands, and serve as bridges between this world and the hereafter. This definition has been accepted for centuries as an unquestioned framework. However, a thorough and careful reading of the Quranic text brings to light certain verses where the concept of "angel" steps outside this established framework. In this regard, Quran 2:102 stands out as a particularly striking example — both linguistically and conceptually — especially in relation to the figures of Harut and Marut.

Because Arabic is built on a root system, understanding the semantic world of words through their roots is of great importance. The root م-ل-ك(m-l-k) is one of the most productive and semantically rich roots in Arabic. When the principal words and concepts derived from this root are examined, a common semantic core becomes apparent: sovereignty, governance, possession, and the holding of power.

- مَلِك (malik): King, ruler, one who holds sovereign power.

- مُلْك (mulk): Sovereignty, dominion, domain of governance.

- مَلَك (malak): In traditional theological contexts, a celestial being; yet etymologically, a

word carrying the meaning of "one who holds power and authority."

- مَلَكَ (malaka): To possess, to hold, to govern.

- مَالِك (mālik): Owner, master, proprietor.

Examining these derivatives makes it clear that the root m-l-k inherently contains a relationship of hierarchy and power. The word malak derived from this root is not independent of this semantic network. Indeed, within the Arabic linguistic tradition, some scholars have argued that the word malak is connected to risāla (the function of messengership), while others have emphasized that etymologically it is related to power and authority. In the classical lexicon Lisān al-ʿArab by Ibn Manzur, the relationship of the concept of malak to the root m-l-k is also addressed around the themes of "strength" and "holding a function." This linguistic foundation opens the door to a reinterpretation of the figures in Quran 2:102. If the word malak etymologically contains the meanings of "ruler, one who holds power, bearer of sovereignty," then not every usage of this word necessarily points to a theological being.

The Text of Quran 2:102 and Its Traditional Interpretation

The verse reads as follows:

"And they followed what the devils recited during the reign of Solomon. Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and what was revealed to the two rulers in Babylon, Harut and Marut. They did not teach anyone without saying, 'We are a trial, so do not disbelieve.' Yet people learned from them what causes separation between a man and his wife. But they cannot harm anyone except by God's permission. They learned what harms them and does not benefit them, knowing full well that whoever buys into it has no share in the Hereafter. How wretched is that for which they sold themselves. If only they knew."

In traditional commentaries, Harut and Marut have been interpreted as two angels. Exegetes such as al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Razi proposed that these figures were celestial beings; in some narrations, it is told that these angels descended to earth and succumbed to human weaknesses. The theological concern underlying this interpretation is understandable: angels represent the power and authority of God, and thus associating these figures — attributed as the source of magic — with angels reinforced the idea that magic is a corrupted form of divine knowledge. Yet this interpretation brings with it serious theological contradictions. The notion that angels, defined as beings fully obedient to God and incapable of sin, would teach humans sedition and harm is irreconcilable with the traditional understanding of angels.

Conceptual Tensions in the Verse

The Contradiction Between Angelhood and Sedition

The verse explicitly states that Harut and Marut said, "We are a trial (fitna)." The word fitna carries negative meanings such as testing, causing disorder, and leading into

corruption. Within the established framework of Islamic theology, angels never deviate from God's command. In that case, an angel declaring in its own voice "I am sedition" empties that very concept of its content. Some traditional commentators have tried to resolve this contradiction by arguing that Harut and Marut taught magic "for the purpose of warning." However, this explanation conflicts with the natural flow of the text. The verse emphasizes that people learned from these two figures what was harmful rather than beneficial, and that this knowledge drew them away from goodness. For a teaching presented as a "warning" to produce such destructive results presents a theologically inconsistent picture.

A Presence Confined to Babylon

It is well known that angels undertake a universal function, serving continuously throughout all of cosmic and human history. Yet in the verse, Harut and Marut are geographically associated with Babylon alone. This locality suggests that these figures were not angels bearing a universal celestial mission, but rather governing figures holding power and authority in a specific region. From a historical perspective, Babylonian civilization provided a cultural environment in which magic and occult practices were applied in a highly developed form. The priestly class in Babylon consisted of governing figures who held both religious and political power and shaped a large portion of social life. In this context, the association of Harut and Marut with Babylon points to their being a local authority of power and knowledge.

The Teaching of Magic and the Power Relationship

In the verse, Harut and Marut are depicted as figures who teach magic and, in particular, knowledge that can be used to cause separation between spouses. The fact that this knowledge is transmitted within a "teaching" relationship offers an important clue that these figures represent an authority of knowledge and power. Evaluated within the semantic context carried by the root m-l-k, it may be thought that Harut and Marut are positioned as a kind of sage-ruler or power-holding figure. Additionally, the expression "Solomon's mulk" (dominion/kingdom) in the verse is also noteworthy. Mulk derives from the root m-l-k and directly denotes the domain of governance and sovereignty. The opposition of the transgressors to Solomon's mulk and the subsequent involvement of Harut and Marut renders the power struggle in the verse more pronounced.

Harut and Marut as "Rulers"

In light of the linguistic and conceptual evidence presented above, it is possible to understand the term malakain ("two angels") in Quran 2:102 as "two rulers" or "two holders of power." This reading is consistent both with Arabic's root-meaning system and with the internal logic of the verse. Accordingly, Harut and Marut are two figures holding political or religious power in Babylon — authority figures within society. These figures used magical knowledge as an instrument of power and taught it to others. Their self-description as "sedition" shows that they were aware of the consequences of this teaching, yet continued to transmit this knowledge nonetheless. Furthermore, this reading consistently explains why Harut and Marut are associated exclusively with Babylon: because they are not angels endowed with a

universal mission, but governing figures who are the holders of power in a specific geography. This is also consistent with the Quran's general stance regarding magic and sorcery. The Quran treats magic as a practice that generates corruption among people and distances a person from God. In this context, Harut and Marut may be read as figures of authority presented as the source of magic who left negative effects on society.

A Comparative Assessment with the Traditional Interpretation

The traditional interpretation, while accepting Harut and Marut as angels, attempts to answer the question of why these figures taught magic through various narrations. The majority of these narrations tell of angels being sent down to earth after belittling humanity's sinfulness, only to fall into the same sins themselves. However, such isrāʾīliyyāt narrations are problematic both in terms of theological consistency and in terms of the Quran's general understanding of angels. The explanation advanced here is grounded in the Quranic text's own internal linguistic and conceptual coherence. Understanding Harut and Marut as "rulers" or "figures of power" neither legitimizes magic nor weakens the Quran's negative stance toward it. On the contrary, this interpretation — by revealing that the source of magic rests upon human structures of authority — strengthens the Quran's more comprehensive discourse on the relationship between power, knowledge, and morality.

Conclusion

Quran 2:102 is an important example demonstrating that the Quran does not use the concept of angel with a uniform and fixed semantic load in every context. The semantic universe of the root م-ل-ك (m-l-k) encompasses the themes of sovereignty, governance, and power. In this context, understanding the figures of Harut and Marut in the verse as holders of power or governing figures in Babylon — beyond the traditional notion of angels — offers a more coherent interpretation both linguistically and conceptually. This reading allows the elements of "sedition," "harm," and "the teaching of magic" in the verse to form a consistent whole, while also explaining why Harut and Marut are associated not with a universal mission but exclusively with Babylon.

Seeking Truth in the Age of Information Pollution

We live in an age witnessing an abundance of information unlike anything in human history. Through smartphones, social media platforms, and digital news channels, an event occurring in any corner of the world can reach millions within seconds. Yet this unprecedented flow of information has brought with it a profound paradox: the easier access to information becomes, the harder it is to reach accurate information. The abundance of data has, ironically, laid the groundwork for truth to become even more obscured.

The Anatomy of Information Pollution

When we consume a piece of news today, we often fail to realize in time that what is presented to us is not the whole truth. Images are shared stripped of their context;

statistics are presented selectively; only a certain aspect of an event is highlighted while the rest is obscured. Some of this stems from careless oversight, while a significant portion is deliberately constructed for ideological, political, or commercial interests.

Today's media is largely divided into two poles: pro-establishment and opposition. Both sides relay only the information that supports their own argument, while ignoring contradictory data. This creates a serious obstacle to the public accessing healthy, balanced information. Trusting a single source or a single perspective means seeing only one slice of reality.

Social media algorithms, meanwhile, promote content that reinforces what a person already believes, giving rise to what is known as the "filter bubble" — a tunnel of perception. In such an environment, individuals tend to accept information that feeds their own biases as truth, while becoming increasingly closed off to different perspectives.

The Qur'an's Warning: Verification of News Made Obligatory

This problem is not new to humanity. Centuries ago, the Holy Qur'an directly addressed the individual and social dimensions of this issue. In Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, Allah says:

> "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful."

When reflected upon deeply, this verse contains a remarkably comprehensive set of principles.

First, the necessity of paying attention to the source of news. The verse clearly states that news coming from a "fasiq" — an unreliable, morally inconsistent source — must not be accepted without verification. Translated to our time, this reminds us that not every platform, every account, or every channel carries equal credibility. The source's intent, track record, and trustworthiness are just as important as the content of the news itself.

Second, the obligation to investigate and verify. The command "investigate" places upon the believer the responsibility of being not a passive consumer, but an active questioner. The essence is not to take information as given, but to think about it, question it, and where possible, confirm it.

Third, the social devastation of unverified information. The verse emphasizes that acting on false information is not merely a personal error — it carries the risk of "harming a people." This shows that the responsibility of knowledge transcends individual morality and takes on a social dimension.

Fourth, the inevitability of regret. Every decision made without investigation will, sooner or later, end in remorse. This is a universal truth that applies both in worldly relationships and on the Day of Reckoning.

The Dangers of Losing the Capacity to Question

What brings a person to the most dangerous point is not merely accepting a false piece of information, but gradually losing the ability to question altogether. An individual who does not investigate, who unconditionally believes what they hear, first easily adopts all kinds of baseless claims, and then transforms into an active defender and spreader of those claims. Indeed, we sometimes witness in society how even irrational rumors come to be accepted by large masses. This picture shows that misinformation is no longer just a simple mistake, but a harbinger of mental and moral collapse — because a mind nourished on false information gradually loses the ability to distinguish right from wrong, and becomes susceptible to all kinds of manipulation.

The Danger of Deviant Guidance: Following the Footsteps of Evil

The Qur'an points to an even deeper dimension of this danger. In Surah An-Nur, verse 21, it is said:

> "O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan — indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have been pure, ever, but Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

This verse situates the matter of information consumption within a much broader moral framework. One who acts without investigation or questioning may, unknowingly, have fallen in behind a guide that commands evil. Those individuals and entities that spread misinformation, distort truth, or circulate baseless claims for manipulative purposes are precisely the "deviant" figures this verse describes.

Today, disinformation is fed not only by individual errors but by systematic and organized efforts. Certain circles consciously produce and spread false information to shape public opinion in a particular direction. A person who unknowingly becomes complicit in such manipulation bears a heavy responsibility — both for themselves and for the society they influence.

The Foundation of Justice: Sound Knowledge

The responsibility for knowledge is not limited to media consumption; it extends to the most ordinary moments of everyday life. In a family dispute, condemning one party after hearing only one side; passing premature judgment on someone in a community about whom we have no real knowledge; or confirming an unfounded piece of gossip in a circle of friends — all of these are violations of the same principle.

Justice is built on sound knowledge. Every judgment constructed from incomplete, distorted, or biased information contains an inherent injustice at its core, no matter how sincere the intent behind it. The consequences manifest as damage to individuals' dignity, the erosion of relationships, and the undermining of social trust. Sometimes these consequences can reach irreversible proportions.

The Path to Truth: A Critical and Balanced Approach

So what approach should be taken to reach accurate information? A few core principles can serve as guides here.

First and foremost, one must not remain dependent on a single source. Following a story from only one place provides not the full truth, but merely one reflection of it. When different sources, different perspectives, and even opposing views are evaluated together, truth emerges more clearly.

Second, questioning the reliability of the source is essential. Every platform, every account, and every channel may have an agenda, a vested interest, or an ideological stance. Information consumed without acknowledging this reality easily lays the groundwork for manipulation.

Third, avoiding action driven by emotional reactions is critically important. Strong emotions such as anger, fear, or excitement can temporarily disable the capacity to question. Producers of disinformation target precisely this psychological vulnerability. For this reason, one must be especially careful and cautious toward content that provokes an intense emotional response.

Finally, verifying information before spreading it is both an individual and a social responsibility. Every piece of content shared means morally partaking in the possible consequences of that content. To spread unverified information is to become a link in the chain of misinformation.

The Believer Thinks, Questions, and Investigates

The Holy Qur'an does not grant the Muslim the luxury of being a passive, unquestioning consumer of information. On the contrary, it frames the imperative to investigate every piece of news heard, to question every image seen, and to remain vigilant against manipulative discourse as a direct matter of faith.

In an age where information is this complex, manipulative, and polluted, the Qur'an's principles offer a brilliant guidance stretching from centuries past into our present day. Engaging our intellect and conscience, diversifying our sources, refraining from judgment without verification, and making the pursuit of truth a way of life — these are the indispensable conditions of both individual maturity and societal health.

For we know: the true believer is not one who believes what they merely hear, but one who believes what they have genuinely investigated.

The Reality of Barzah: How Oceanography Confirms the Secret Pointed to by the Quran

A significant portion of modern critiques directed at the Quran rest on the claim that some of its statements are incompatible with scientific data. Among these critiques, verses concerning the non-mixing of fresh and salt water are frequently brought up. Critics either regard such expressions as the product of naive observation or claim they have been refuted by contemporary science. Yet these claims require familiarity with both the context of the Quranic text and the current data of the relevant scientific disciplines.

The Quran contains multiple verses pointing to the coexistence of two different bodies of water and the distinction between them. Surah Al-Furqan, verse 53, states: "He has released the two bodies of flowing water, meeting side by side; between them is a barrier so neither one transgresses." In Surah Ar-Rahman, verses 19–20, it is emphasized that two seas meet and yet an insurmountable barrier exists between them. The word "barzah" used in these verses means, in Arabic, a passage, gap, or barrier between two things. It does not describe a concrete obstacle in the form of a physical wall or dam, but rather an intermediate zone — a transitional area that prevents two elements from completely consuming one another while allowing each to persist. Evaluating the verse in a rigid, literal framework without heeding this linguistic nuance leads to a loss of meaning. The majority of criticisms are rooted precisely at this point — in a failure of understanding that occurs without contextual reading.

The Reality Revealed by Oceanography: The Separation of Waters

Modern oceanography has demonstrated through scientific measurement that water masses of differing salinity and temperature exist side by side in certain regions and, contrary to expectation, do not immediately and completely mix with one another. This phenomenon is referred to in the scientific literature as a halocline — a stratification process formed on the basis of salinity gradients.

Density Difference and Stratification

Salt water is denser than fresh water due to its dissolved minerals and salts. This density difference functions as a mechanism that directly inhibits vertical mixing of the water. Fresh water floats above salt water; salt water sinks to the bottom. Thus, two different water masses continue to exist as separate layers — not by means of any physical barrier, but solely by virtue of their own properties. This phenomenon is termed stratification in the scientific literature.

The Role of Temperature Difference

Temperature is another fundamental variable affecting density. When water masses of different temperatures approach one another, mixing remains limited during the period before thermal equilibrium is established. The boundary between warm and cold water is called a thermocline, while regions where both salinity and temperature variables are simultaneously effective are defined as a pycnocline.

Current Systems and Discharge Differences

At points where a river empties into an ocean or sea, the river's high discharge and directional flow dynamics cause the fresh water to spread across a wide surface area. This spreading delays the immediate mixing of the two waters. Two water masses with differing current directions can continue to exist as separate layers for extended periods, even while occupying the same region.

Observable Examples

The Strait of Gibraltar

The Strait of Gibraltar, where the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean meet, provides one of the most striking examples of this phenomenon. Mediterranean water is far saltier and therefore denser than Atlantic water due to its high evaporation rate. As a result, water exiting the Mediterranean plunges beneath the Atlantic, and the complete mixing of the two masses can only occur over long distances and long periods of time. Scientists are able to separately identify the two water masses in this region through deep-water sampling.

The Amazon River and the Atlantic Ocean

The Amazon — one of the rivers with the highest freshwater discharge in the world — carries enormous quantities of fresh water into the Atlantic Ocean at its mouth. Due to the density difference, this fresh water spreads over the surface of the ocean's salt water and continues to flow for hundreds of kilometers without undergoing any significant mixing with the salt water. Satellite imagery makes this separation visible even as a difference in color.

The Nile Delta and the Mediterranean

A similar dynamic is observed in the delta region where the Nile River empties into the Mediterranean. The complex interaction of temperature, density, and current systems delays the complete mixing of the two water masses — a phenomenon observable both physically and biologically.

Estuaries and Bays

In closed bay and estuary systems where tidal influence is limited, the fresh-salt water separation can be observed in a far more pronounced and sustained manner. In these regions, a two-layered structure forms — fresh water on top, salt water below — and this structure can remain undisturbed for extended periods.

The Correspondence Between Quranic Expression and Scientific Concept

Returning to the concept of "barzah": there is a remarkably striking correspondence between the area this word describes and what oceanography terms the "transition zone," "mixing boundary," or "halocline interface." Science has shown that this intermediate region bears the characteristics of neither pure fresh water nor pure salt water — it is a distinct transitional area located at the boundary of the two masses, allowing both to preserve their existence. This definition corresponds precisely to the semantic structure intended by the Quran's use of the word "barzah."

That the Quran articulated this phenomenon in the 7th century — in an era without depth-measuring instruments, salinity sensors, or satellite imaging — in concise and straightforward language is remarkable in its own right. For a person living in that period to discover this kind of stratification through coastal observation alone, and to express it conceptually, would have been extraordinarily difficult; the phenomenon can only be fully understood through deep-level sampling and chemical analysis.

The Epistemic Problem with the Critiques

The critiques on this subject suffer from a serious methodological weakness: critics subject the Quran to the rigid criteria of modern terminology while severing it from its own linguistic and conceptual framework. Yet the context in which a text is read directly determines what that text means. Interpreting the phrase "between them is a barrier" as an absolute claim that the two water masses have no contact whatsoever is erroneous both linguistically and logically.

Furthermore, some critics suggest that the phenomenon in question does not scientifically exist or can be easily refuted. The existing oceanographic literature, however, possesses an extensive body of data that clearly documents the phenomenon's existence. The critique is therefore without scientific foundation; on the contrary, scientific reality supports the phenomenon to which the Quran points.

When the Quranic verses concerning the separation of fresh and salt water are read carefully and contextually, it becomes evident that they do not contradict the findings of modern oceanography. The scientific phenomena expressed through concepts such as halocline, stratification, density boundary, and transition zone are highly consistent with the physical reality described by the Quran's "barzah" metaphor.

This correspondence does not require positioning the Quran as a scientific encyclopedia, but it does demonstrate that the text points to the subtleties of nature with deep awareness, and that its claim to universal validity is not mere empty rhetoric. Those who allege a conflict with science need to examine both the context of the text and science's own findings with greater rigor. For in this domain, the real contradiction lies not between the Quran and science — but between a critique lacking scientific literacy and reality itself.

Boycott or Unity? The Stance of Contemporary Muslims Against Oppression from a Quranic Perspective

In today's world, Muslims continue to be crushed under the heavy burdens of war, occupation, and oppression. From Palestine to Kashmir, from Myanmar to Yemen, it is entirely understandable that every person of conscience feels compelled to do something in the face of such suffering. Perhaps the most widespread and visible form of this response is the boycotting of products belonging to countries believed to perpetrate or support oppression. However, Islam is grounded not in emotion-driven reactions but in principle-driven action. The Quran commands Muslims not merely to oppose oppression, but to do so within the bounds of justice and morality. Therefore, whether collective actions such as boycotts truly constitute an Islamic stance must be carefully examined in the light of the Quran. This piece will address the moral problems concealed behind the apparent appeal of boycotts within the framework of the Quran's core teachings, and will discuss how Muslims can adopt a conscious, just, and unifying posture against oppression.

The Moral Boundaries the Quran Protects Even in War

Throughout Islamic history, the concept of jihad has carried a broad meaning encompassing not only actual warfare but every form of struggle. Yet every form of this struggle must be conducted within strict moral limits. The Quran sets out an

exceptionally clear principle on this matter:

"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors." (Al-Baqarah, 190)

This verse articulates a universal principle that guides not only actual combat but every form of struggle Islam wages against oppression: even a just cause cannot be pursued through unjust means. If even war has its limits, it is a profound contradiction to suppose that an economic action can be without limits. A boycott may appear on the surface to be an innocuous economic act. Yet upon close examination, it becomes clear that its actual targets are not rulers but workers, small tradespeople, manufacturers, and ordinary people who produce those goods. The Quran, however, is explicit in establishing individual responsibility. Placing another's guilt upon someone else is incompatible with Islam's moral framework:

"No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another." (Al-An'am, 164)

Attributing a country's state policy to its entire population reflects a notion of collective punishment that the Quran rejects. This is the most fundamental moral contradiction of the boycott.

Fidelity to Agreements and the Inviolability of the Innocent Individual

The Quran commands adherence to agreements made with the enemy even during war. The fourth verse of Surah At-Tawbah declares that even treaties made with polytheists must be fulfilled in full. This principle makes it obligatory that even measures taken against oppression not compromise justice. The sixth verse of the same surah presents an even more striking picture: even someone from enemy ranks who seeks protection must be granted asylum and conveyed to a place of safety. The Quran safeguards the rights of the innocent individual even when that individual belongs to the enemy. This principle directly targets the problem of indiscrimination inherent in collective actions such as boycotts, which place the responsible and the irresponsible, the guilty and the innocent, on the same scale. It is precisely at this point that the depth and comprehensiveness of the Quran's understanding of justice becomes apparent: justice in Islam is a universal standard that must be applied consistently, not only in our favor but against us as well.

The Principle of Unity and the Divisive Effect of Boycotts on the Ummah

In the Quran's vision of the ummah, unity is not a preference but a fundamental necessity:

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." (Ali 'Imran, 103)

This verse commands Muslims to unite around a common value and to keep away from discord. While actions like boycotts may appear on the surface to be a display of solidarity, in practice they often produce precisely the opposite result. Questions such as which products to boycott, which countries to include, and how long the action should last give rise to deep disputes and divisions within Muslim

communities. Some regard the boycott as obligatory, others as an innovation; some target only specific brands, others demand a broader action. Over time, these disputes erode the unity around the actual cause and channel a great portion of energy into internal conflicts rather than directing it toward productive ends. Yet the Islamic community can rise not through internal tensions but through a shared sense of purpose and a solid moral foundation. Every action that prepares the ground for strife, however good the intentions behind it, runs contrary to the spirit of unity the Quran commands.

The Deep Chasm Between Words and Deeds: A Quranic Observation

The Quran requires that opposition to oppression be manifested not only in speech but in action. Surah An-Nisa, verse 75, draws attention to the unavoidability of actual struggle on behalf of the oppressed. This verse makes clear that real and concrete struggle for those who suffer is a responsibility before God. In this context, the Quran offers a striking historical example from the Children of Israel. After Moses, the Children of Israel asked their prophet for a king, yet when fighting was made obligatory, the great majority turned back; despite claiming to have been driven from their homes, they shrank from battle. (Al-Baqarah, 246) The Quran presents this attitude explicitly as a subject of reproach and a lesson. Projected onto today's world, this picture looks remarkably familiar. Those who call for boycotts with great enthusiasm on social media fall silent when actual struggle is required; they retreat when the matter goes beyond a decision not to purchase a product. Yet the Quran explicitly condemns this hypocritical stance. True faith and conscience demand a deep harmony between words and deeds.

The Practical Consequences of Economic Boycotts: Do They Harm the Oppressor or the Oppressed?

Assessing the practical effects of boycotts is a matter of concrete responsibility that goes beyond purely ethical evaluation. When historical and contemporary data are examined, it becomes evident that comprehensive economic boycotts tend to hit not the governments they target but rather the middle and lower classes of those countries. Especially in export-dependent economies, small businesses, workers in free zones, and subcontractors — sectors that are themselves victims of state policies — become the primary targets of the boycott. Moreover, in geographies such as Palestine, boycotts sometimes directly or indirectly worsen the living conditions of the very people in that region. This reality is in direct conflict with the Quranic principle that "no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another." For if a boycott punishes individuals who are independent of the policy it targets rather than the state pursuing that policy, it has produced the very opposite of its intended result — harming the oppressed rather than the oppressor.

The Real Solution: A Conscious, Just, and Unifying Islamic Stance

The presentation of boycotts as a prescription for salvation, and the way they divert Muslim energy away from real solutions, constitutes a serious problem. The Quran offers Muslims a far more fundamental and integrated roadmap for standing against oppression:

First, knowledge and awareness: Muslims must build a strong intellectual foundation in order to understand systems of oppression. The Quran commands thinking, questioning, and understanding repeatedly. Deep comprehension must take precedence over slogans, and strategic reason over reactive action.

Second, unity and organization: Rather than calls for boycotts, the goal should be the institutional strengthening of the Muslim world. An ummah that builds its own economic infrastructure, produces technology, and forges diplomatic networks can offer a genuine alternative to oppression — not through externally dependent reactive actions, but by growing stronger from within.

Third, a language of justice: Muslims must ground their opposition to oppression not only for their own communities but upon universal principles of justice valid for all of humanity. The Quran makes justice obligatory not only for the benefit of Muslims but under all circumstances and for everyone. This universal language establishes a far broader basis of legitimacy in the eyes of world public opinion.

Fourth, concrete aid and practical solidarity: Rather than rhetoric and symbolic actions, concrete humanitarian assistance that actually reaches the oppressed — legal support, education, and economic empowerment programs — yields far more lasting results.

Not Boycott, but Unity; Not Anger, but Principle

Remaining silent in the face of oppression is, of course, unacceptable. The Quran never permits the silencing of conscience. Yet what the Quran teaches us is to channel anger in the right direction and to calculate the moral consequences of action in advance. Boycott actions that punish innocent individuals, sow seeds of discord among Muslims, and function as a symbolic curtain concealing actual struggle are not fully in harmony with the Quran's understanding of justice, unity, and responsibility. What the ummah truly needs today is an awakening shaped not by fleeting anger but by enduring principle. Holding fast to the Quran, acting in unity, applying justice consistently both for and against oneself, and standing against oppression not merely in words but through conscious action — this is the true path to salvation. A boycott is a reaction. Unity is a strategy. Islam does not advance through reactions, but through principles and steadfast resolve.

The Third Eye: A Critical Evaluation at the Intersection of Science, Religion, and Culture

"The third eye" is a mystical concept that has left its mark on many cultures and belief systems throughout history and continues to enjoy popularity today. Encountered across a broad spectrum — from Eastern spiritualism to Western esotericism, from ancient mythology to modern self-help discourse — this concept is presented as a symbol of inner intuition, hidden knowledge, and spiritual awakening. Yet when its anatomical, scientific, theological, and epistemological dimensions are examined separately, it becomes clear just how layered a collection of misconceptions this concept truly is.

The Third Eye from an Anatomical Perspective: Is There a Physical Reality?

The human anatomy is structured to perform the function of vision exclusively through two eyes. The eyes are a complex system consisting of the retina, lens, cornea, and optic nerve, and both are directly connected to the brain's visual cortex. There is neither anatomical nor neurological evidence for the existence of a third, independent visual organ.

Those who advocate for the "third eye" claim sometimes reference the pineal gland — the epiphysis — found in humans. This small gland, located at the very center of the skull just above the brainstem, produces the hormone melatonin and regulates biological rhythms and the sleep-wake cycle. The philosopher René Descartes once described it as "the seat of the soul," and the fact that it is now presented in mystical circles as "the center of the third eye" is largely rooted in this historical association. However, modern neuroscience has clearly established that the pineal gland has no direct relationship to vision or intuitive perception. Its function is endocrinological and is entirely confined to a biochemical role.

In some animals — particularly reptiles — there exists a genuine parietal eye, or pineal eye. In species such as iguanas and tuataras, this structure is located at the top of the skull and is sensitive to light; however, it does not produce images. Instead, it detects changes in ambient light and body temperature and influences the neuroendocrine system. The pineal gland, by contrast, is blind, small, and entirely unrelated to visual function. Directly applying the example of the parietal eye in animals to humans is therefore biologically unfounded.

The Plica Semilunaris and Darwin's Error

Another structure occasionally raised in discussions of the "third eye" is the plica semilunaris — a crescent-shaped piece of tissue located in the inner corner of the eye. Charles Darwin described this tissue as a functionless, vestigial organ and interpreted it as one example of structures inherited from reptilian ancestors.

This interpretation laid the groundwork for the idea of a "remnant third eye of animal origin" in humans. However, modern research in ocular anatomy has proven this interpretation to be incorrect. The plica semilunaris serves concrete functions: contributing to the distribution of tear fluid, removing foreign bodies, and facilitating mobility in the inner corner of the eye. It is therefore not a "functionless" organ, but rather one whose function was not yet sufficiently understood.

Darwin's error on this point is significant in that it illustrates the temporal limitations of scientific knowledge. While the concept of vestigial organs is not an incorrect claim per se, it is an evolutionary argument that must be handled carefully and is increasingly being revised today. This information should not be used to provide a foundation for "third eye" claims; on the contrary, it demonstrates how superficial interpretations of anatomical structures can be deeply misleading.

The Cultural and Mystical Dimension: From Hinduism to Modern Spiritualism

The most deep-rooted and systematic expression of the "third eye" concept is found

in Hinduism. In the system of energy centers known as chakras in Hindu thought, the sixth chakra is known as "ajna" or the brow chakra, and is located at the center of the forehead, between the eyebrows. The word ajna means "to perceive" or "to command" in Sanskrit. In Hindu metaphysics, having this chakra open is associated with deep inner awareness, intuitive wisdom, and spiritual clarity.

The "tilaka" tradition is the external manifestation of this chakra in Hinduism. The dot or mark drawn at the center of the forehead symbolizes the third eye of the god Shiva. In Shiva iconography, this eye represents the power to see beyond deceptive appearances and grasp universal truth. Similar symbolisms are found in other Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Taoism. The "Eye of Horus" in ancient Egyptian iconography can also be regarded as a different reflection of this symbolic tradition.

The problem with all these symbolic narratives begins when the symbolism is attempted to be transformed into a literal anatomical reality or a universal human faculty. The modern self-help industry has created a vast market with methods such as "chakra opening," "awakening the pineal gland," or "activating the third eye" — a situation that has paved the way for spiritual symbols to be reduced to commercial tools. This broad market, stretching from meditation techniques to crystal therapy, from binaural sound frequencies to various supplements, is built upon a manipulative discourse.

The Unseen (Ghayb) and the Limits of Knowledge in Islamic Epistemology

Evaluating the "third eye" claim within the framework of Islamic belief first requires an understanding of the sources of knowledge in Islamic epistemology. According to the Quran, the legitimate sources of knowledge for humanity are: revelation, rational reasoning, the senses, and observation-based knowledge. Knowledge claimed to be obtained outside these four sources — particularly through a mystical inner organ — is incompatible with the Quranic understanding of knowledge.

The Quran states clearly and definitively that the keys to the ghayb — the unseen and the unknown — belong to Allah alone. The verse "Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah" (An-Naml, 27:65) draws this boundary without leaving any room for debate. Allah's attributes of 'Alīm (the All-Knowing) and 'Allāmu'l-ghuyūb (the Knower of all that is hidden) indicate that this knowledge is not shared with created beings, nor is it accessible through any biological or spiritual capacity.

When we evaluate the "third eye" claim within this framework, we see that at its core, the claim amounts to this: through an organ or energy center that is either innate in humans or can be awakened through certain techniques, it is possible to learn the future, know what is hidden, and see what is invisible. This claim directly contradicts the principle that the ghayb belongs to Allah alone. Accepting the existence of such a faculty undermines the principle of tawhid (divine unity), for to attribute — even indirectly — one of Allah's exclusive attributes to a created being is to open the door to shirk (associating partners with Allah).

Basirah and the Third Eye: A Conceptual Confusion

The "third eye" concept is sometimes conflated with the concept of basirah in Islamic literature. While this conflation might suggest a superficial similarity between the two concepts, the difference between them is essential and defining.

Basirah is defined in Islam as "the faculty of distinguishing truth from falsehood by the light of faith." This faculty is not tied to a physical organ; rather, it belongs to the heart — the spiritual dimension that Islam recognizes as the center of understanding and will. Basirah is a spiritual insight bestowed by Allah upon His servant, developed through the disciplining of the self (nafs), worship, piety (taqwa), and drawing closer to Allah. It is not attained through any technical exercise, meditation, or stimulation of a specific point on the body.

The "third eye," on the other hand, is portrayed as a mystical anatomical structure or energy center — one that can be "opened" through techniques, exercises, and special methods. This characteristic automatically ties the concept to certain ritual practices and, more often than not, to a mystical teacher or guide. It is precisely at this point that the two concepts sharply diverge: basirah is the fruit of the servant's relationship with their own soul and with Allah; the "third eye" is positioned as the product of a technical process that is taught and transmitted from outside.

The Limits of Human Perception in Islamic Anthropology

According to Islamic belief, the instruments of human perception are defined and limited. The outer senses — the five sense organs — allow for the observation of the external world and the comprehension of physical reality. The inner senses are expressed as the heart, the intellect ('aql), and basirah. The heart, in Islam, is not merely an emotional organ but is also recognized as the center of intellect and will. The intellect produces evidence, makes analogical reasoning, and distinguishes right from wrong. Basirah, through the light of faith, strives to grasp the meaning behind the visible.

What is noteworthy in this system is that none of the instruments of perception is defined as a gateway to the ghayb. When the Quran describes the creation and endowment of the human being, it makes no mention of a hidden "eye of knowledge" in the forehead. On the contrary, the human being is depicted as a limited yet equipped creature in the verse: "Have We not made for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips?" (Al-Balad, 90:8–9). To claim a mystical organ of perception beyond this endowment is an approach that strains the Quranic definition of humanity.

The Risk of Manipulation and Social Consequences

The discourse of the "third eye" must be addressed not only theologically and scientifically, but also sociologically. In recent years, this concept has become a commercial tool particularly in areas such as personal development, spiritual coaching, and "energy work." This market, which feeds on people's search for meaning and their curiosity about the unknown, at times manipulates individuals in serious ways.

None of the services offered by individuals who demand high fees with phrases such

as "I will open your third eye," "I will cleanse your forehead," or "I will erase your karmic energy" have any experimentally verified basis. Such practices not only exploit people financially but can also drive them away from genuine psychological or medical help.

This picture — which emerges when superstition and manipulation become intertwined — clearly demonstrates how vital the skill of critical thinking truly is.

Conclusion

The "third eye" concept harbors three distinct claims that have become conflated with one another: first, a claim of anatomical reality; second, a claim of a universal human faculty; and third, a claim of knowing the unseen or perceiving the invisible. When each of these three claims is examined separately, they are found to contain conclusions that are inconsistent, unfounded, or dangerous.

From a scientific standpoint, there is no third visual organ in humans; the pineal gland is related not to vision or intuition but to hormonal regulation; and the plica semilunaris is not functionless — it is simply a structure whose function was understood late.

From a theological standpoint, Islamic belief states unequivocally that the ghayb belongs to Allah alone. Any claim of access to the invisible through an organ, energy center, or technique contradicts the principle of tawhid and has no basis whatsoever in the Quran. Islam's concept of basirah cannot be equated with the "third eye," because basirah is the fruit not of a technical process, but of faith and the disciplining of the self.

In conclusion, the "third eye" is neither a biological organ nor a religious truth. It is a cultural and esoteric belief system, and its harm arises when it is instrumentalized for commercial gain and when attempts are made to legitimize it through religious terminology. Scientific literacy and a sound theological foundation are the most reliable safeguards against such misconceptions.

Hadith Criticism Through a Quran-Centric Approach: Painters, Chess Players, and the Question of Shirk

The Quran establishes a clear hierarchy among sins. At the top of this hierarchy sits shirk — associating partners with God — as the one unforgivable sin. Surah An-Nisa 4:48 states this principle with striking clarity:

> "Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating partners with Him, but He forgives anything less than that for whoever He wills. And whoever associates partners with Allah has certainly committed a tremendous sin."

This verse draws a theologically decisive boundary: the guarantee of non-forgiveness belongs exclusively to shirk. All other sins fall within the scope of potential forgiveness by God's will. The same principle is repeated in An-Nisa 4:116, and this repetition demonstrates how central the matter is to the Quran's overall coherence. On the question of punishment, the Quran presents a consistent picture: the greatest

punishment corresponds to the greatest sin. In Surah Al-Furqan 25:68–69, where major sins are enumerated, shirk again heads the list and is linked to the declaration that "the punishment will be multiplied." This structure clearly reveals the Quran's internal consistency and its balance between sin and consequence.

The Contradiction in Hadith Narrations: Painters and Chess Players

Against this Quranic framework, certain narrations found in hadith literature raise a serious question of inconsistency.

The first narration: Hadiths recorded in Bukhari and Muslim state that those who will suffer "the most severe punishment in Hell" are painters — referred to in some versions as musawwiroon (image-makers). This narration became one of the foundational pillars of the juristic tradition prohibiting depictions of humans and animals.

The second narration: A narration transmitted in Hafiz al-Dhahabi's Kitab al-Kaba'ir (Major Sins) uses similar language about chess players facing the most severe punishment.

When these two narrations are considered together, they produce a picture that contradicts even itself: which group will truly suffer the most severe punishment — painters or chess players? The superlative language used in both narrations can logically apply to only one group. This internal contradiction calls the reliability of these narrations into question on their own terms.

The Dimensions of Conflict with the Quran

Violation of the Punishment Hierarchy

According to the Quran, the greatest punishment must correspond to the greatest sin: shirk. Since no sin is greater than shirk, associating any profession or activity with a punishment more severe than that of shirk directly undermines the hierarchy the Quran establishes. If a painter — merely by drawing a human figure without associating partners with God — is subject to "the most severe punishment," what punishment remains for the one who commits shirk? This question cannot be left unanswered from a theological standpoint.

The Quran's View of Art

The Quran does not explicitly prohibit painting, sculpture, or the visual arts in any verse. On the contrary, many verses actively encourage human reason and observation. Surah Al-Ankabut 29:20 commands, "Travel through the earth and observe how He began creation," while Surah Az-Zumar 39:9 exalts knowledge and observation with the question, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" These general principles are incompatible with a perspective that condemns human creativity and artistic expression.

More striking still: the Quran itself mentions that statues were made in the palace of Prophet Solomon. Surah Saba 34:13 recounts that the jinn made for Solomon

"sanctuaries, statues, bowls like reservoirs, and fixed cauldrons" — and this act is met with no negative evaluation whatsoever. This passage is strong evidence that the Quran contains no categorical prohibition on figurative representation.

The Tradition of Hadith Fabrication: A Historical Reality

The fabrication of hadiths is a historical fact acknowledged by classical Islamic scholars themselves. Among those considered founders of the science of hadith, leading figures noted that hundreds of thousands of narrations were in circulation, the vast majority of which were not authentic. The fact that Imam Bukhari, in his own selection process, accepted only a few thousand out of millions of narrations as authentic illustrates the sheer scale of this fabrication phenomenon.

What were the motivations behind these fabrications? Historical research has identified several primary drivers:

- Political motivation: Narrations were produced to legitimize Umayyad and Abbasid rule or to discredit opposition groups.

- Sectarian motivation: Classical sources contain examples of different juristic schools narrating hadiths to support their own positions.

- Social control motivation: Groups wishing to prohibit certain professions, games, or habits are known to have produced narrations serving that purpose. Narrations concerning the prohibition of chess are typically cited as prime examples of this category.

- Excessive piety motivation: Some transmitters fabricated narrations in order to make religion more stringent.

Analysis of Logical Inconsistencies

The narration stating "painters will suffer the most severe punishment" raises serious logical questions in a contemporary context — questions that cannot be answered, casting deep doubt on the narration's applicability:

The technology and scope problem: If painting is prohibited on the grounds that it produces depictions of humans or living beings, does this prohibition extend to photographers, cameramen, and filmmakers? What about graphic designers and digital artists? Where do engineers developing AI image-generation systems fall within this ruling?

The instrument-agent problem: Smartphone manufacturers, engineers producing every camera-equipped device, and companies marketing these products are indirectly complicit in producing depictions — do they deserve the same punishment? This logic would encompass virtually the entire technology industry of the modern world, a conclusion that points to an unacceptable absurdity.

The purpose and intention problem: The Quran assigns great importance to intention in evaluating deeds. Applying the same punishment without distinction to a painter drawing anatomy for medical purposes and someone crafting an idol for worship

contradicts the Quran's understanding of justice.

The cultural relativity problem: If this ruling is universal and timeless, how are we to evaluate the miniature works produced by Muslim artists during the golden age of Islamic civilization, the figurative compositions adorned with calligraphy, and the rich visual culture of the Ottoman period?

The Principle of the Quran's Sufficiency

Surah Al-An'am 6:38 states: "We have not neglected in the Register a thing." This verse emphasizes that the Quran is a complete and self-sufficient source of religious guidance. Al-An'am 6:34 further affirms the immutability of divine revelation: "There is no changing the words of Allah."

In light of these principles, the following conclusion is unavoidable: if God truly intended to prohibit art or certain professions, He would have stated this prohibition clearly in the Quran. Elevating a prohibition absent from the Quran into Islamic doctrine through hadith narrations contradicts the principle of the Quran's sufficiency. More seriously still, this prohibition not only conflicts with the Quran but implies a punishment greater than that given for shirk itself.

Conclusion

Narrations that place painters or chess players among those destined for the most severe punishment in Hell are problematic on multiple levels.

First, they conflict with the sin-and-punishment hierarchy established by the Quran, which ties the greatest punishment to shirk, while these narrations foreground entirely different actions. Second, the internal contradictions between the narrations weaken their reliability from within. Third, the Quran's general posture toward art and knowledge is irreconcilable with these prohibitions. Fourth, the narrations produce logically inapplicable conclusions in the modern world.

For Islam to remain a living, breathing religion, it is necessary to re-evaluate hadith literature critically in the light of the Quran. This criticism is not a rejection of religion; on the contrary, it is an expression of developing a more faithful understanding of the essence of revelation.

The Quran's core message is clear: the greatest sin is shirk. All matters beyond this must be evaluated within that foundational principle, and no narration should be interpreted in a way that overturns the moral and theological order the Quran has established.

Ultimately, developing a critical stance toward narrations that instrumentalize religious thought to exclude certain professions or activities from social life is a requirement of both intellectual honesty and a Quran-centered understanding of Islam. The question posed in Az-Zumar 39:9 is especially apt in this context: "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" To think, to question, and to seek truth — these are among the most fundamental duties the Quran assigns to humanity.

The Rejection of Reincarnation According to the Quran: One Life, One Test, One Resurrection

Reincarnation is an ancient belief system based on the idea that after death, the soul is reborn in a new body or living being. A central teaching of Hinduism, Buddhism, and ancient Greek philosophy, this view has never been compatible with Islamic belief throughout history. Yet today, certain circles attempt to present reincarnation as an Islamic reality, and even cite Quranic verses as evidence to support it. Here, we will examine these claims in detail within the framework of the Quran's overall coherence, and assess to what extent the belief in reincarnation aligns with Islamic doctrine.

The Basis and Critique of the Reincarnation Interpretation

The verse most frequently cited by those who seek to legitimize reincarnation within an Islamic framework is verse 11 of Surah Ghafir (Al-Mu'min):

"Our Lord! You caused us to die twice and gave us life twice. Now we confess our sins. Is there any way out?" (Ghafir 40:11)

According to this interpretation, the two resurrections mentioned in the verse symbolize — one a return to worldly life, the other a passage to the afterlife. While seemingly attractive at first glance, this interpretation carries serious problems in that it is a reading divorced from the verse's context. A holistic reading of the Quran reveals that the two deaths and two resurrections in this verse must be explained not through reincarnation, but through the chronology of human existence:

- First death: The state of non-existence before a person is created

- First resurrection: Coming into existence by taking on a body in worldly life

- Second death: The ending of worldly life

- Second resurrection: Being raised again in the presence of God on the Day of Judgment

This chronology is also confirmed by another Quranic verse. Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 28, states:

"How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He gave you life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you back to life, and then to Him you will be returned." (Al-Baqarah 2:28)

This verse confines the arc of human existence to a single worldly life and a single resurrection in the afterlife. There is absolutely no mention of recurring earthly lives. Therefore, viewing Ghafir 40:11 as proof of reincarnation represents an approach that runs contrary to the Quran's integrity.

The Impossibility of Returning to the World After Death

The Quran has not left the impossibility of returning to the world after death to

interpretation alone — it states this directly and definitively. In Surah Al-Mu'minun, this matter is conveyed in a remarkably striking manner:

"When death comes to one of them, he says: 'My Lord! Send me back so that I may do good in what I left behind.' No! It is merely a word he is saying. And behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected." (Al-Mu'minun 23:99–100)

This verse shows that the desire to return to the world at the moment of death is categorically rejected. This barrier draws an insurmountable boundary between worldly life and the afterlife. If reincarnation were real, this barrier would be meaningless, since the soul would already be returning to the world in its next body. Similarly, Surah Al-Fajr includes the following expression:

"He will say: 'I wish I had sent ahead something for my life!'" (Al-Fajr 89:24)

These words of profound regret clearly demonstrate that only a single worldly life is lived. If a person had lived multiple lives, one would expect to see the lessons of past lives reflected in this expression of remorse. Yet the picture the Quran draws is of a person giving account for a single life, overcome with sorrow for having failed to make use of past opportunities.

The Principle of First Creation and the Uniqueness of the Body

The Quran also emphasizes that the human being is created only once and will appear before God in the afterlife in the same form as that first creation. Surah Al-An'am states:

"And you have come to Us just as We created you the first time…" (Al-An'am 6:94)

This statement directly contradicts the concept of reincarnation, which is based on the soul wandering through different bodies. In the afterlife, the person will be resurrected in the form in which they were first created — called to account not as the inheritor of lives lived in other bodies, but in their own essence. Surah Ad-Dukhan, in describing the condition of the people of Paradise, includes this statement:

"They will not taste death therein except the first death, and He will have protected them from the punishment of Hellfire." (Ad-Dukhan 44:56)

This verse declares that death is an experience lived only once, and that in the subsequent life of Paradise, death is no longer a possibility. The concept of reincarnation, grounded in a repeating cycle of death and rebirth, contradicts this clear declaration.

The Logical and Moral Contradictions of Reincarnation

The belief in reincarnation contains serious problems not only theologically, but also logically and morally.

The Problem of Identity and Memory: According to reincarnation theory, when the soul passes into a new body, it carries no memories of its previous life. In that case, how is it possible for the person in the new body to be held accountable for old

mistakes or to receive reward for past virtues? Bearing responsibility for a past that is neither remembered nor known is incompatible with the most basic principle of justice.

The Incompatibility of Soul and Body: Every human being is a unique entity with their own genetic makeup, upbringing, character, and abilities. If the same soul exists in different bodies, how is moral and spiritual continuity to be maintained between personalities that differ so radically from one another? The Quran teaches that soul and body are created together, bear responsibility together, and will be resurrected together. This unity is fundamentally at odds with the concept of reincarnation.

The Problem of Divine Justice: In Islamic belief, every person is responsible only for what they themselves have done. The judgment rendered in the afterlife encompasses the deeds of that individual throughout a single worldly life. Reincarnation overturns this equation, trapping the person in a cycle of indeterminate boundaries, bearing the weight of pasts they cannot remember. This picture is incompatible with the clear and individual principle of accountability that the Quran teaches.

The Quran's Fundamental Principle: One Life, One Test, One Resurrection

The framework of existence that the Quran presents to humanity is clear and consistent. This framework can be summarized through three fundamental principles:

First, one life: A person lives in this world only once. The opportunities left behind cannot be compensated for; there is no return.

Second, one test: Worldly life is the one and only arena in which it will be tested what kind of servant a person truly is. The verdict reached as a result of this test is final and unchangeable.

Third, one resurrection: On the Day of Judgment, the person is resurrected in the same form in which they were first created. There is no plurality or cyclicality.

These principles constitute one of the central themes repeated consistently throughout the Quran. The belief in reincarnation displaces these principles with a cyclical and indefinite understanding of existence, weakens the person's sense of responsibility in this life, and obscures the concept of divine justice.

The belief in reincarnation, by its historical roots, belongs to cultures outside of Islam, and contradicts the teachings of the Quran both in letter and in spirit. The verses put forward to support this belief have been interpreted by removing them from their context, and remain isolated readings that do not reflect the Quran's overall position. A holistic reading of the Quran clearly demonstrates that the human being is created once, tested once, and resurrected once in this world. This life has no second chance. This truth that the Quran presents to humanity does not call for taking the world lightly — it commands that every moment be made meaningful, every action be carried out with accountability, and that one be prepared for the afterlife. True salvation lies not in taking refuge in the illusion of repeated lives, but in living this one

and only life in a manner pleasing to God.

Human Dignity and the Ethics of Compassion in Light of Surah Ad-Duha, Verse 10

The Quran is a divine guide that shapes not only forms of worship, but also human relationships, social ethics, and individual conduct down to the finest detail. Perhaps one of its simplest yet most profound messages is found in the tenth verse of Surah Ad-Duha:

"As for the one who asks, never rebuke him." (Ad-Duha, 93:10)

This verse, composed of just a few words, is in itself a complete civilizational project. For the measure of a society's civility lies not in how it treats the powerful, but in how it treats the weak, the needy, and those who ask for help. This verse states that standard with remarkable clarity and resolve: when a person asks another for help, they must not be rebuked, belittled, or humiliated.

The Context: Understanding the Spirit of Surah Ad-Duha

Surah Ad-Duha was revealed during a difficult period for the Prophet Muhammad, at a time when revelation had paused for a while and some polytheists were mocking him, saying "Your Lord has abandoned you." In this surah, Allah first addressed the Prophet to console him, then reminded him of the blessings he had been given, and finally placed upon him a duty:

"So do not oppress the orphan, and do not rebuke the one who asks." (Ad-Duha, 93:9-10)

What is particularly striking is that Allah directs these principles to His own prophet. This demonstrates how foundational and indispensable these moral principles are. Not oppressing the orphan and not rebuking the one who asks are not mere recommendations in Islam — they are direct divine commands.

Furthermore, just before these verses, Allah reminds the Prophet of his own past: "Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? Did He not find you lost and guide you? Did He not find you poor and enrich you?" (Ad-Duha, 93:6-8) This reminder is deeply meaningful — for when a person recalls the hardships they themselves have endured, they can more readily share in another's pain. The most powerful way to invite a person toward compassion is to remind them of their own vulnerability and history.

Asking for Help: Not Shame, but Life

In the modern world, asking for help is often coded as a sign of weakness. The narrative of "be strong, depend on no one" forces individuals to live like closed islands, turning the act of asking for help into something almost tantamount to an admission of failure. Yet the Quran offers an entirely different perspective.

Asking is an unavoidable dimension of being human. No person can exist entirely on their own. As infants, we need care; when ill, we need assistance; in old age, we need support. At every stage of life, a person is compelled, in some way, to lean on another.

This reality is not a weakness — on the contrary, it is the clearest evidence that human beings are social creatures.

Poverty, illness, debt, natural disasters, job loss — countless circumstances can force a person to ask for help. Many people find themselves in difficulty due to conditions entirely beyond their control, and are compelled to reach out to others. It is precisely at this point that Ad-Duha verse 10 demolishes the greatest wall standing before the person who asks: the fear of being rebuked. For the fear of rebuke silences people, prevents them from receiving help, and pushes them toward both material and spiritual collapse.

Where Generalization Becomes Injustice

An objection sometimes raised in society goes like this: "Not everyone who asks for help is truly in need; some have turned it into a source of income." This observation may reflect a certain degree of reality. However, using this observation to place all who ask for help in the same category is both morally and epistemologically flawed.

Islamic law and ethics are grounded in evaluating individuals according to their true circumstances, not their outward appearance. Only Allah knows what a person has endured, what they have suffered, and in what moment of desperation they were compelled to reach out. Our task is not to try to read what is in someone's heart, but to approach the person before us with compassion.

To judge all by the actions of some — on the grounds that "some abuse it" — is to punish the innocent and the genuinely needy as well. That is plain injustice. True poverty is often invisible. Therefore, rather than judging what is visible, the most sound approach is to be compassionate toward both the visible and the invisible.

SMA Patients and the Cry of Our Age

One of the most striking contemporary examples of "asking" is found in the fundraising campaigns run by families of children living with SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy). SMA is a severe neurological disease that paralyzes the muscles and, as it progresses, leads to death. Treatment is possible — but the medications and procedures involved require costs far beyond what an ordinary family can afford.

Faced with this reality, these families are not helpless — they are remarkably determined. They launch campaigns on social media, go door to door, and appeal institution by institution for support. This effort is not "begging" — it is a pure, simple, and dignified struggle for life. To belittle a mother or father who knocks on every door so that their child may breathe is to distance oneself both from humanity and from the teachings of the Quran.

It is precisely here that Ad-Duha verse 10 transcends its historical context and becomes a universal, contemporary call: "As for the one who asks, never rebuke him." Here, to rebuke is not merely to wound a person — it is to deny a child's right to life. And that is nothing less than a transgression of the moral boundaries set by Allah.

Compassion: Not a Feeling, but a Responsibility

In Islam, compassion is not merely an emotional state — it is a conscious posture of responsibility that a person assumes toward life, toward fellow human beings, and toward Allah. Two of Allah's most frequently repeated names are ar-Rahman and ar-Rahim — "the Most Compassionate" and "the Ever Merciful." The repetition of these names at the beginning of every surah signals that compassion forms the very essence of Islam.

Compassion is not only a moral virtue — it is a divine principle of reciprocity. One who shows compassion to others receives the compassion of Allah. Therefore, to adopt a rebuking, belittling, or contemptuous attitude toward someone who asks for help is not only a transgression against that person — it is a rejection of Allah's order of mercy. That is an enormously grave spiritual responsibility.

Bringing the Verse to the Center of Life

Ad-Duha verse 10, within its few-word simplicity, contains a vast architecture of ethics. This verse teaches us the following:

- Any person may one day find themselves in need — this does not diminish their dignity.

- Asking for help is not an expression of powerlessness, but of courage and honesty.

- It is not our place to judge those who ask; treating them humanely, however, is an unambiguous obligation.

- True need is often invisible; to judge even what is visible is an injustice.

- The effort of a family fighting for their child's life is one of the most elevated forms of "asking" there is.

Making compassion the dominant force in social life is not only an individual virtue — it is also a necessary foundation for building a healthy and just society. To be a society that is merciful rather than judgmental, inclusive rather than exclusionary, is the very horizon that the Quran has drawn for us. And the first step toward reaching that horizon lies in internalizing one principle — simple in form, yet immeasurable in depth:

"As for the one who asks, never rebuke him." (Ad-Duha, 93:10)

This verse speaks to everyone who has ever been compelled to reach out throughout history, to every family running a fundraising campaign today, and to each of us who may one day find ourselves in need. On the day we place it at the center of our lives, we will have become not only better Muslims — but better human beings.

"Surely with hardship comes ease." (Al-Inshirah, 94:6)

Natural Disasters in the Quran: Divine Warning and Its Reflections on Our Time

Throughout human history, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other natural

disasters have left behind not only physical destruction but also profound questions. Why do these calamities occur? Is there meaning or a message in them? How responsible is humanity for these events? The Quran answers these questions not only through a theological lens, but also through a moral and social framework. Natural disasters in the Quran are not treated as purely physical events; rather, they are presented as reflections of divine warnings directed at humanity, of societal collapse, and of individual responsibility.

Nature in the Quran: Mirrors of Reflection

The Quran presents nature not merely as a backdrop, but as a text to be read. Mountains, seas, rain, wind, and earthquakes are all described as ayat — signs. Within this framework, natural disasters are not meaningless coincidences but events laden with meaning. Verse 41 of Surah Ar-Rum is perhaps the most concise expression of this approach: "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's own hands have done, so that He may cause them to taste something of what they have done, and perhaps they will return." This verse lays bare a striking truth: the root cause of corruption in nature is what humanity has wrought with its own hands. Corruption here can be read not only as a moral concept, but also as physical, ecological, and societal deterioration. Human beings are responsible both for their own souls and for the environment they inhabit, and when that responsibility is violated, the consequences inevitably return.

Historical Societies and Disaster: Punishment or Warning?

The Quran does not relay the stories of destroyed civilizations merely as historical narratives; it presents them as lessons, as mirrors held up to people of every age. Verse 40 of Surah Al-Ankabut summarizes the essence of these accounts: "So We seized each one for his sin: among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the mighty blast, and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned. Allah would not have wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves." Several points in this verse are noteworthy. First, the form of punishment differs from one society to the next — each civilization was confronted with an end befitting its own injustice and denial. Second, it was not God who wronged them, but the injustice wrought by their own hands; God merely permitted the natural and divine consequence of that injustice to unfold. Third — and most importantly — these disasters did not arrive suddenly or without warning. Verse 59 of Surah Al-Kahf states: "And those cities — We destroyed them when they committed wrong, and We made for their destruction an appointed term." The concept of an "appointed term" is crucial. God does not punish any society without first warning it. Messengers are sent, signs are given, opportunities are granted. But when these warnings are repeatedly ignored, disaster becomes inevitable. This understanding of divine justice is a foundational principle woven throughout the Quran.

The World: An Arena of Trial

According to the Quran, the defining quality of worldly life is trial. Every blessing

granted to a person and every hardship they encounter are elements of this trial. Earthquakes, too, must be understood within this whole. Earthquakes are natural events arising from the dynamic structure of the earth's crust — part of God's order of creation. This scientific reality does not contradict the Quran's perspective; on the contrary, they complement one another. The physical cause of an earthquake is sought in tectonics, but its layer of meaning lies in the attitude of the human being who faces it — in the lesson drawn, in the choice made. An earthquake may present itself at times as a warning, at times as a test, and at times as the bitter fruit of accumulated neglect. The responsibility the Quran places on humanity here is perfectly clear: to take heed from disasters, to turn toward repentance, and to reform oneself and society. What is expected of people in the face of destruction is not merely grief, but reflection and change.

Reflections on Today: Human Errors Amplify Disaster

When we apply this Quranic perspective to present-day Turkey, a striking picture emerges. Turkey sits atop one of the most tectonically active regions in the world, most notably along the North Anatolian Fault and the East Anatolian Fault. This geographical reality has been known for centuries. And yet the following errors have been systematically repeated:

Uncontrolled construction in high-risk areas: Millions of structures have been built near tectonic fault lines without soil surveys or any regard for earthquake resistance. The 1999 Marmara Earthquake demonstrated this reality at the cost of thousands of lives — yet the lesson was never permanently absorbed.

Substandard building materials and unauthorized construction: The debate over "contractor ethics" has become one of Turkey's chronic problems. Construction amnesties granted under political pressure, unsupervised building, and the use of cheap materials multiply the destructiveness of earthquakes many times over.

Ignoring scientific warnings: Geologists, geophysical engineers, and urban planners have been publishing warning reports for decades. Yet these warnings have largely been dismissed due to economic interests, political calculations, and societal negligence.

Unplanned projects in risk zones: Istanbul and the Marmara basin are particularly sensitive areas, combining high seismic risk with dense population. Yet massive urban transformation and infrastructure projects continue to be implemented in the region without being adequately reconciled with seismic risk.

The Canal Istanbul Issue: One Project, Multilayered Risk

In this context, the Canal Istanbul project deserves separate consideration, both for its physical risks and for the dimension of moral responsibility it raises. From a technical standpoint, the project directly triggering a major tectonic earthquake appears scientifically unlikely. However, this is not an absolute guarantee, as several significant risk mechanisms exist.

First, large-scale excavations and changes in groundwater levels may create

conditions for local, small-scale tremors — known as induced seismicity. Second, the project route's relative proximity to the North Anatolian Fault cannot be overlooked; changes in soil structure could exert an indirect effect on fault lines where stress has accumulated. Third, and perhaps most critically, is the weakening of ground integrity. During a major earthquake, the destruction in an area where ground stability has been compromised could be far more severe than in areas with intact ground.

Ultimately, Canal Istanbul should be regarded as a factor that — even if it does not cause an earthquake — may amplify the destructiveness of one. This situation offers a concrete illustration of the phrase from Surah Ar-Rum: "what people's own hands have done."

Two Responsibilities: Toward Nature and Toward Oneself

The Quran describes the human being as a khalifah — a steward — on earth. To be a steward means to care for the earth, to protect it, and to govern it with justice. This is not merely a religious obligation but an existential duty. Earthquakes and other natural disasters offer humanity two fundamental reminders. The first is to lay bare the power of God and the transience of worldly life — no human force, no mass of concrete, can change this reality. The second is to underscore the necessity of a sense of responsibility, because the great majority of loss of life stems not from the force of nature, but from human negligence. To grasp both of these truths together means both to bow in humility and to take precautions with reason and science. The Quran presents these not as rivals, but as complements.

Taking Heed Is Not Enough — Change Is Required

The Quran's view of natural disasters is neither one of resignation nor of a purely secularist scientism that excludes the divine. It builds, between these two extremes, a deep and holistic sense of responsibility. When disasters strike, it is correct to say, "This is God's decree" — but when those words become a veil that conceals human negligence, political indifference, and moral collapse, they lose their meaning. The Quran stands firmly against precisely this: yes, God's decree holds; but human errors, too, produce their consequences.

What is required of us today is to heed scientific warnings, to put into practice a genuinely earthquake-resistant and honest approach to construction, to confront major projects with seismic and ecological realities, and above all to remember these verses not only after disasters strike, but before they do. For the Quran's words encompass both its first audience and us: "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's own hands have done, so that He may cause them to taste something of what they have done, and perhaps they will return." To return — is to return while there is still the chance to do so.

Allah's Pleasure: The Purpose of Human Existence and the Core Message of the Quran

Throughout history, humanity has grappled with the questions "Why do I exist? What is the purpose of my life?" and has turned to various philosophical, religious, and

moral systems in search of answers. Some thinkers sought happiness in hedonism, others in power and success, and still others in social acceptance and fame. Yet Islam offers an exceptionally clear, consistent, and universal answer to this question: the fundamental purpose of human existence in this world is solely to earn Allah's pleasure. This purpose is not a superficial religious slogan; it is a profound existential principle that must radically transform all of one's intentions, actions, and relationships. The Quran — particularly in Surah Al-Baqarah — contains numerous verses that illuminate this principle. In light of those verses, this essay will examine what Allah's pleasure means, why humanity must focus exclusively on it, and how this focus transforms one's life.

The Transience of Worldly Life and the Fundamental Mistake

The Quran does not fundamentally belittle worldly life or dismiss it. On the contrary, it defines the world as a domain of trial and preparation. The real danger lies in perceiving the world's fleeting beauties as permanent. It is precisely this illusion that drives people to seek the approval of others rather than the pleasure of Allah. People often fall into the following traps: living to earn the admiration of others, compromising their values for material gain and status, and expecting the rewards of their good deeds from people rather than from God. Even when these expectations are met, the satisfaction is temporary; when they are not, a deep sense of disappointment and meaninglessness becomes inevitable.

A life grounded in Allah's pleasure eliminates this very fragility. For Allah's pleasure is independent of whether people appreciate us, whether circumstances are favorable, or whether worldly returns materialize. As long as a person acts with sincere intention, their gain is guaranteed.

Al-Baqarah 207: The Person Who Devotes Themselves to Allah

Verse 207 of Surah Al-Baqarah depicts the pinnacle of living for Allah's pleasure:

"And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is kind to His servants."

The expression "sells himself" in this verse is an extraordinarily powerful metaphor. It does not refer to a market or a bazaar, but to a person dedicating their very self — their ego, their interests, and even their life if necessary — entirely to Allah. Such a person disregards worldly expectations, the praise they might receive from others, and material benefit. Their sole goal is the pleasure of their Lord.

Let us place a thought experiment against this image: if a person calculates what others will think while doing good; if they make their charity visible to certain people while overlooking others; if they experience resentment and disappointment when their expectations go unmet — then that person has placed others, not Allah, at the center of their actions. This is what the Quran calls riya — deeds performed for show.

Yet in deeds done for Allah, there is a spiritual liberation. You are not obliged to receive appreciation. You are not obliged to be understood. You are not obliged to carry the exhaustion of expecting a return. The act reaches its divine recipient

directly — and Allah "is kind to His servants." The peace this assurance provides is a kind of tranquility that no human praise can offer.

The Centrality of Intention: Is Allah's Pleasure a Goal or a Means?

An important distinction must be underlined: Allah's pleasure is not a tool used to achieve some other end — it is itself the ultimate goal. The correct approach is not the mindset of "let me begin with the intention of earning Allah's pleasure so that this endeavor succeeds," but rather the question: "Is this action consistent with Allah's pleasure? Will it earn that pleasure?" This difference is critically important. Directing one's intention toward Allah's pleasure is not a tactic; it is the fruit of a profound inner transformation.

In many places, the Quran emphasizes the inseparability of deed and intention. Two outwardly identical actions — one done for Allah and one done for fame — are entirely different in spiritual worth. Within this framework, the question a Muslim individual continually needs to ask themselves is: "For whom am I doing this?" This question applies at every moment — in prayer, in charity, in family relationships, in professional life, and in social responsibility.

Al-Baqarah 265: The Metaphor of Fertile Ground

To describe the spiritual productivity of expenditures and good deeds done for Allah's pleasure, the Quran employs a powerfully evocative image from nature. Verse 265 of Surah Al-Baqarah states:

"The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a garden on high ground struck by a downpour — it yields double its produce. And if no downpour strikes it, then a drizzle suffices. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."

This parable is worth examining on several levels.

High ground: A garden on elevated terrain rests on a solid foundation; it is not vulnerable to floods and is less prone to decay. Deeds oriented toward Allah's pleasure similarly rest on firm ground — they do not erode with changing circumstances, people's shifting attitudes, or the world's fickle winds.

Heavy rain: When favorable conditions arrive, it yields double the produce. In other words, an action taken with Allah's pleasure in mind grows and spreads exponentially when the environment is accommodating — when society is receptive and resources are abundant.

The sufficiency of a drizzle: But the most striking part is this: if favorable conditions do not arise, if the heavy rain does not fall, even a drizzle is sufficient. No act of goodness done for Allah's pleasure is ever wasted. A small gesture, a quiet prayer, a help rendered unseen, a modest act of charity in times of scarcity — none of these escape Allah's gaze.

The verse concludes with a declaration: "Allah, of what you do, is Seeing." This sentence is not a mere observational report — it is a profound guarantee. People may

not see; people may not appreciate. But Allah sees.

Al-Baqarah 272: The Responsibility of Guidance and the Conditions of Doing Good

The third and deeply liberating dimension of the understanding of Allah's pleasure appears in verse 272 of Surah Al-Baqarah:

"Not upon you is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever good you spend is for yourselves, and you do not spend except seeking the countenance of Allah. And whatever you spend of good — it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."

This verse presents three fundamental principles together.

First, the principle that outcomes belong to Allah. A Muslim commands good, speaks the truth, and sets an example — but does not expect the guidance of others to be the inevitable product of their own effort. The outcome belongs to Allah. This is not an escape from responsibility; on the contrary, it lifts from a person's shoulders a burden they cannot carry — the obligation to change other people. Thus one can fulfill their duty without being overwhelmed by the anxiety of "why am I not being accepted, why am I not seeing results?"

Second, the principle that doing good is ultimately for oneself. The phrase "whatever good you spend is for yourselves" is remarkably striking. The one who gives appears to be the giver, yet the true beneficiary is themselves — for the spiritual accumulation, the development of character, and the reward in the hereafter all return to the benefit of the one who does good. This sentence frames charity not as a sacrifice, but as a wise investment.

Third, the guarantee of full recompense. "Whatever you spend of good — it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged." No act of goodness directed toward Allah receives an incomplete return; none is lost; none is treated unjustly. Human systems of justice err; appreciation falls short; labors go unnoticed. But the divine balance is never disrupted.

The Tension Between Human Approval and Allah's Pleasure

In practical life, these two orientations — the approval of people and the pleasure of Allah — sometimes align and sometimes conflict. Acting honestly in a business setting may lead to short-term financial loss. Speaking the truth in a social context may require relinquishing popularity. Being just within the family may strain certain relationships.

What determines a person's true compass in such moments? For someone who has placed Allah's pleasure at the center, these questions are answered more readily — for the criterion is clear. The question "Is this action in accordance with Allah's pleasure?" takes precedence over "What will people say?" This choice may seem difficult at first, but over time this inner consistency grants a person a profound sense of confidence and freedom. Seeking approval from others makes one a perpetual hostage to ever-shifting expectations. But anchoring oneself in Allah's

pleasure provides an unchanging standard and a stable identity.

Patience, Peace, and the Dimension of the Hereafter

Living for Allah's pleasure is not merely a moral principle — it is also a spiritual prescription. In the face of the hardships, disappointments, and injustices that the world brings, the Muslim's weapon is patience (sabr). This patience is not passive resignation; it is an active resistance nourished by the certainty that outcomes rest in Allah's hands.

Every injustice a person suffers in this world, every instance of being overlooked, every inadequate recognition — each acquires meaning in light of Allah's perfect justice. Belief in the hereafter is not merely a promise of reward after death; it is the antidote to the sense of meaninglessness experienced in this life. If the action is right, the intention is pure, and the goal is Allah's pleasure, then the reward for that action is secured beyond the bounds of time and place.

Where Is True Gain?

Living for people is exhausting — because people's expectations change, their affections are conditional, and their admiration is fleeting. Wealth depletes, status fades, and fame grows dim. But a life dedicated to Allah's pleasure is the source of true gain both in this world and the next.

When these three verses of Surah Al-Baqarah are read together, a complete philosophy of existence emerges: the human being dedicates themselves to Allah (207); every good deed performed through this dedication inevitably finds its reward (265); and they fulfill their duty while leaving the outcome to Allah (272). This threefold framework offers the architecture of a free, peaceful, meaningful, and purposeful life.

In conclusion, Islam's answer to the deepest question of existence is simultaneously the most practical guide: Live not for people, but for Allah. Pursue not fleeting gains, but eternal felicity. For the one who earns Allah's pleasure, both this world and the next are filled with true gain.

The Concept of "Khalīfa" in the Quran and the Process of Its Historical Politicization

The concept of "khalīfa" as it appears in the Quran is among the most distorted concepts in Islamic history. Overshadowed by centuries of political calculations, cultural interactions, and traditional interpretations, this word has been severed from a holistic reading of the Quran and replaced by a "caliphate" institution shaped by historical and political interests. Yet when examined within the Quran's own internal coherence and contextual integrity, it becomes unmistakably clear that the concept of "khalīfa" in no way defines a figure who "rules in God's name," "receives revelation," or "bears divine authority."

In Arabic, the word khalīfa (خليفة) derives from the root h-l-f (خ-ل-ف), whose primary meaning is "one who comes after another, who takes another's place, a successor." The derivatives of the verb khalafa — namely khalā'if and khulafā' — belong to the

same semantic family. The word carries no meaning of divine representation or deputyship within the Arabic semantic universe. Arabic has distinct words for "representative" or "deputy"; the lexical meaning of khalīfa corresponds to none of them. This linguistic fact alone constitutes a critical warning for all political and theological structures built upon this concept. For no matter how widespread a word's secondary usage may have become within tradition, severing it from its original meaning cannot be accepted as a legitimate method of interpreting divine speech.

Contexts of Use in the Quran

A careful examination of the verses in which the Quran uses the forms khalīfa, khalā'if, and khulafā' reveals that all of them cluster around three mutually reinforcing axes of meaning.

1. Consciousness of Trial and Responsibility (Al-Baqara 2:30)

"When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am placing a khalīfa on earth,' they said, 'Will You place therein one who will spread corruption and shed blood, while we glorify Your praises and sanctify You?' He said, 'I know what you do not know.'"

This verse is the foundational text for understanding the concept. What is striking is this: the angels anticipate that this being to be placed on earth will "spread corruption and shed blood." Had khalīfa meant a sacred representative or an infallible divine deputy, such an objection from the angels would have been meaningless. This question, on the contrary, makes it plainly evident that the human being is a creature open to trial, capable of error, and accountable. The dimension foregrounded in the verse is not representation but the responsibility of being tested.

2. Historical Succession and Intergenerational Continuity (Yunus 10:14)

"Then We made you successors on earth after them, to see how you would act."

In this verse the concept is used in its plural form khalā'if and describes the new generations that take the place of past communities. The meaning operates entirely on a historical and sociological plane: a community that comes after another — one that has perished or passed into history — is in that sense a khalīfa. The verse underscores that this succession too is arranged for the purpose of trial. The phrase "to see how you would act" once again reinforces the dimension of testing inherent in the concept.

3. Justice-Based Governance and Responsibility (Sād 38:26)

"O David! We have made you a khalīfa on earth; judge between people with truth, and do not follow desire, lest it lead you astray from the path of God."

The position of khilāfa granted to the Prophet David in this verse, when read carefully, presents itself not as divine deputyship but as an obligation to rule with justice. Moreover, the warning that follows immediately in the same verse is profoundly significant: "Do not follow desire." If David's khilāfa were a station of infallibility

divinely guaranteed, this warning would be rendered entirely meaningless. The verse as a whole openly acknowledges the responsibility and fallibility that khilāfa entails.

Contexts in Which the Quran Does NOT Use "Khalīfa"

A comprehensive survey of the Quranic text establishes conclusively that the word khalīfa is used in no verse to mean:

- A figure who rules in God's name and possesses absolute authority,

- A recipient or intermediary of revelation,

- A sinless, infallible leader under divine protection,

- A messianic figure with the sole right to make decisions on behalf of believers.

This absence is not incidental. The Quran's principle of *tawḥīd* recognizes no mediating authority between God and the human being. Divine sovereignty belongs to God alone. Indeed, the principle "Judgment belongs to God alone" (*al-ḥukm illā lillāh*) is repeated numerous times in the Quran. Within such a framework, attributing to a human being the quality of "one who rules in God's name" is conceptually a direct contradiction of tawḥīd.

Historical Politicization: The Transformation of the Concept

The political vacuum that arose in the Muslim community following the death of the Prophet Muhammad constituted a decisive turning point in the concept's transformation. The title that initially emerged as "successor to God's messenger" was gradually and systematically elevated to the position of "God's khalīfa on earth." This transformation is not a harmless semantic drift; it is a deliberate and politically constructed process.

Transformation in the Sunni Tradition

Particularly with the consolidation of Umayyad power, caliphs came to be positioned not merely as political leaders but as the source of religious authority as well. The title Amīr al-Mu'minīn is the institutional expression of this process. During the Abbasid era this structure deepened further, and extensive jurisprudential and theological justifications for the caliph's religious legitimacy were produced. In this way the plain and functional concept deployed by the Quran was converted into a foundation of legitimacy for political domination.

Transformation in the Shia Tradition

In the Shia tradition, this structure developed in a different direction around the concept of imāma. The Imams were defined not merely as political leaders but as infallible guides possessing divine knowledge and authority. In this understanding, every decision of the Imam is considered beyond question, being supported by divine guarantee. Claims of infallibility and divine representation — which the Quran explicitly refutes — thus found an institutional foundation within this structure.

External Cultural Influences

Explaining this transformation solely through the internal political history of Islam would be inadequate. The Byzantine and Sasanian political cultures that Muslims encountered through the conquests had normalized the concept of the "divine or sacred ruler." The "god-king" figure of the Pharaonic tradition, or the Byzantine emperor depicted as the "shadow of God," constituted a ready template in the minds of the people. The transplanting of this template into the political order of Islam was a process both understandable and deeply dangerous.

Contradiction with the Principle of Tawḥīd

The tawḥīd belief that forms the foundational axis of the Quran acknowledges in an absolute sense that God alone is sovereign. Within the framework of the principle "Judgment belongs to God alone," no human being can be granted the authority to rule in God's name. The Quran also explicitly reserves salvation for God alone — a truth clearly expressed in Al-An'ām 6:51 and Al-Zumar 39:44. Within this framework, the historical institution of the caliphate can be seen to conflict with tawḥīd in at least three critical respects:

First, the problem of monopolization. The concentration of religious authority in a particular individual or dynasty amounts to the delegation of divine sovereignty to a human institution — something irreconcilable with the essence of tawḥīd.

Second, the door it opens to shirk. Making obedience obligatory to a human being who claims to represent God's rule blurs the absolute distinction between God and the human, constituting an extremely dangerous threshold from a theological standpoint.

Third, the erasure of individual responsibility. The Quran insistently emphasizes that every human being is personally accountable for their own actions. Any understanding that makes submission to a sacred leader figure its cornerstone renders this individual responsibility inoperative.

The Quran's Genuine Understanding of "Khalīfa"

When the Quran is read holistically, it becomes clear that the concept of khalīfa describes a human being who bears responsibility on earth, is subject to trial, is obligated to rule with justice, and must not act contrary to God's commands. This definition contains no sanctity — only responsibility and examination. There is no elevated office, only obligation. There is no savior, only accountability. Every Muslim — indeed every human being — is expected to carry this consciousness of responsibility. Khilāfa in this sense expresses not a position conferred on a particular individual but an existential condition attributed to all of humanity on earth. For we have all come into this world, taken on responsibility, and are being tried.

The concept of khalīfa in the Quran is one that acquires meaning within the framework of the consciousness of trial, historical succession, and the responsibility of just governance — a concept that carries no claim to divine representation or absolute authority. The historical reshaping of this concept into "God's representative

on earth" through political needs, external cultural influences, and traditional interpretations originates not from the Quran's own discourse but from the political dynamics of human history. A Quranic reading centered on tawḥīd does not recognize this transformation as legitimate.

Not divine representation but devotion to the divine command; not sacred leadership but a life lived with individual and collective consciousness of responsibility — this is the genuine framework the Quran sets forth. To reconstruct this framework is not merely a historical critique; it is also the intellectual and conscientious obligation of every thoughtful Muslim who holds tawḥīd at the center of their faith.

The Story of Monk Bahira: An Evaluation from the Perspectives of Isnad, Text Criticism, and the Quran

Among the narratives belonging to the early periods of Islamic history, the story of Monk Bahira stands out as one of the most intriguing and contested traditions. The narration claims that during a trade journey to Damascus undertaken by our Prophet Muhammad in his childhood or early youth alongside his uncle Abu Talib, a Christian monk recognized him as the future prophet. The most striking element of the account is the manner in which Bahira arrived at this recognition through an extraordinary sign: according to the narration, a cloud cast shade exclusively over our Prophet Muhammad, distinguishing him from the other travelers.

This story has the character of a frequently repeated narrative deeply embedded in popular memory within Islamic literature. Yet when examined from the perspectives of hadith scholarship, historical criticism, and a Quran-centered reading, the narration is seen to contain serious weaknesses.

The Primary Source: Ibn Ishaq and the Problem of Isnad

The foundational source first transmitting the Bahira story is Ibn Ishaq's (d. 151/768) al-Sira. Regarded as one of the early and foundational texts of Islamic historiography, this work presents one of the most comprehensive and systematic accounts of the Prophet Muhammad's life. However, the manner in which Ibn Ishaq transmits this narration is itself a significant subject of debate.

Ibn Ishaq presents the story without any accompanying chain of transmission. Instead, he employs tamrid formulas such as fima yaz'umun — meaning "according to what they claim." In hadith methodology, tamrid formulas are a clear signal that the transmitter views the narration as weak or doubtful. Ibn Ishaq's very choice of this phrasing therefore reveals that he regarded the account not as established historical fact, but as a transmission conveyed with reservation.

The narration is said to be traced back to Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muhammad from the generation of the Tabi'in. However, a critical problem exists here: two or more transmitters have dropped out between Ibn Ishaq and Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr. In hadith scholarship this situation is expressed by the concept of mu'dal — referring to narrations in which two or more consecutive transmitters are missing from the chain. Mu'dal narrations constitute one of the lowest tiers of weak hadith and are

considered extremely limited in their historical value.

Al-Tabari (d. 310/923) also transmits this narration in his history. The narrations al-Tabari conveys from Ibn Ishaq and al-Tirmidhi carry the same weaknesses in terms of isnad. This demonstrates that despite the narration appearing in multiple sources, the fundamental isnad problems remain unresolved. The repetition of a narration in numerous works does not enhance its reliability, since each repetition is seen to rest upon the same weak foundation.

The Problem of al-Waqidi and Ibn Sa'd's Narration

The narration transmitted in Ibn Sa'd's (d. 230/845) al-Tabaqat al-Kubra relies on al-Waqidi (d. 207/823). This situation creates a separate problem for the narration's reliability. Al-Waqidi is an extremely controversial figure in the eyes of hadith authorities. Al-Bukhari and numerous other hadith scholars have made severe assessments of al-Waqidi, among which appear serious charges including "transmitting weak narrations" and "conveying fabricated hadiths." Leading figures in the field of narrator criticism such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'in also found al-Waqidi's narrations unreliable. In this context, a narration resting on al-Waqidi directly inherits the debates surrounding his reliability. Furthermore, Ibn Sa'd's transmission is also seen to retain its mu'dal character. That is, the narration coming through al-Waqidi is not at a level acceptable by hadith scholarship, due both to this figure's credibility problem and the breaks in the chain of transmission.

The Tirmidhi Narration: Relatively Stronger, But Insufficient

The narration accepted as the most sound isnad regarding the Bahira story appears in al-Tirmidhi's (d. 279/892) al-Sunan. Al-Tirmidhi characterized this narration as hasan gharib — a designation indicating that while the narration is not rejected outright, it carries certain problems in terms of isnad. The term gharib in hadith methodology identifies narrations transmitted by only a single transmitter at any link in the chain. This shows that the information at that point rests on a single individual and that no other supporting channels exist. Al-Tirmidhi's own statement that "we know this narration only from this route" confirms this assessment. Had the narration been reliable and sound, it would have come through different chains among the many Companions and Tabi'in. Yet a narration confined to a single route may be the product of an isolated narrative tradition rather than historical reality.

Moreover, the hasan designation itself reveals that the narration does not reach the level of sahih. In hadith scholarship a threefold classification exists: sahih, hasan, and da'if; hasan represents a position between sahih and da'if. Consequently, while the Tirmidhi narration appears relatively more sound compared to the others, it is not at a level capable of carrying a claim to historical certainty.

Textual Criticism: Contradictions in the Content of the Narration

Among hadith scholars, textual criticism carries as much importance as isnad analysis in evaluating a narration. When the content of the Bahira story is examined, certain elements raise serious question marks both in terms of physical

inconsistency and contradiction with historical reason.

The cloud and tree shade contradiction: The account mentions a cloud shading only the Prophet Muhammad, while some versions also speak of a tree simultaneously providing shade. These two elements functioning simultaneously and for the same purpose is physically contradictory, adding an unrealistic and artificial mystical atmosphere to the narrative. Al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348) drew particular attention to this element, stating plainly that the narration "is not authentic."

The silence of the crowd: According to the narration, this extraordinary shading event took place before the eyes of dozens of people during a caravan journey. Why did these witnesses not transmit this event? Had such a striking incident truly occurred, it would inevitably have been spoken of throughout the journey and afterward. Yet in the narration, the other individuals appear merely as passive figures, and their observations and reactions are almost never conveyed.

Silence in Mecca: It is also thought-provoking that the caravan returning to Mecca after the Damascus journey did not spread word of this event by mouth. Such an extraordinary experience would have spread quickly in the oral culture of the period, and there would certainly have been references to this memory when the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation. Yet in the narrations, at the moment of the first revelation, Khadija and Waraqa ibn Nawfal are seen to console the Prophet Muhammad by turning not to the Bahira event but to other signs.

The problem of dramatic construction: When the structure of the narration is examined, it is noticed that events are conveyed almost entirely from Bahira's perspective and in his voice. Bahira's recognition of the Prophet Muhammad, his questioning of him, his setting a special table, and then his warning of Abu Talib — all these scenes lend dramatic cohesion to the narration. However, this dramatic cohesion is simultaneously a sign that the account may possess a fabricated character. Real historical events are generally not conveyed with such rounded and dramatic cohesion.

The Quranic Perspective: The Most Decisive Criterion

In evaluating a narration, alongside isnad and textual criticism, harmony with what the Quran establishes also stands out as a fundamental criterion. At this point, the Bahira story is seen to be in serious conflict with Quranic verses.

In verse 86 of Surah al-Qasas it is stated: "You did not expect that the Book would be revealed to you." This verse clearly establishes that before receiving revelation, the Prophet Muhammad did not know and did not expect that such a duty would be given to him. A similar expression also appears in Surah al-Shura: "You did not know what faith was, nor what the Book was."

These verses emphatically underscore that in the period before his prophethood, the Prophet Muhammad was not aware of any sign or premonition that he would become a messenger. Yet the Bahira story directly contradicts this divine declaration. Had the Prophet Muhammad as a child undergone such an extraordinary experience

— surrounded by extraordinary signs and given glad tidings of prophethood by a monk — this event would have left an indelible mark both in his own mind and in the memories of those who knew him. For someone with such a background, the use of the expression "You did not expect that the Book would be revealed to you" would be meaningless and inconsistent.

Moreover, this type of early recognition narrative positions the Prophet Muhammad as someone already possessing a mystical consciousness of being chosen even before revelation. This is a portrayal quite distant from the portrait of the Prophet Muhammad that the Quran presents. The Quran depicts him as someone who did not live an extraordinary childhood, who led an ordinary human life, and who was commissioned with the coming of revelation.

The Theological and Sociological Background of the Narration

In order to understand how the Bahira story emerged, it is also necessary to consider the scholarly and cultural climate of the period in which the narration was formed. The first two or three centuries of Islam constituted a period in which many accounts relating to the Prophet Muhammad's life were fabricated, compiled, committed to writing, and at times expanded and embellished. In this process, two different tendencies are observed in prophetic biography writing: first, a critical understanding of transmission that attempted to remain faithful to what was thought to be historical truth; and second, the tendency to magnify and idealize the narrative in order to nourish religious sentiment — that is, hagiography. The Bahira story appears to be a typical example of the second tendency. The fundamental function of the narrative is to demonstrate the Prophet Muhammad's chosen status and special position even before revelation, and furthermore, by having this recognition performed by a representative of another religion — a Christian monk — to create an emphasis on universal confirmation.

Al-Dhahabi's characterization of this narration as mawdu' — meaning fabricated — is the harshest expression of the problems the narration carries both in terms of isnad and text. The fabricated category represents the lowest classification a narration can reach in hadith scholarship, and this characterization clearly reveals that the story in question lacks a historical foundation.

Conclusion

The story of Monk Bahira has occupied a broad place in Islamic literature for centuries, has taken root in the popular mind, and has been perceived as an inseparable part of prophetic biography. However, a comprehensive scholarly evaluation of this narration reveals that it rests on a foundation too weak to carry any claim to historical truth.

From the perspective of isnad: Ibn Ishaq's narration is mu'dal and carries tamrid formulas; al-Waqidi's narration is compromised by an unreliable transmitter; al-Tirmidhi's narration remains at the level of hasan-gharib. None of these are supported by a sound chain of transmission.

From the perspective of text: Physical contradictions, the inexplicable silence of the crowd, the fact that it was never spoken of in Mecca, and the excessively dramatic structure of the narrative all point to the story's fabricated character.

From the Quranic perspective: The verse "You did not expect that the Book would be revealed to you" clearly establishes that the Prophet Muhammad was not previously aware of any such premonition or sign, a circumstance that places the Bahira narration in direct contradiction with divine declaration.

In conclusion, the Bahira story is a hagiographic narrative shaped in a period when religious sentiment came to precede historical truth — one that attempts to express love of the Prophet through the medium of legend. The greatest respect for the Prophet Muhammad lies not in presenting him through a portrait different from what he was, but in knowing and introducing him through the true character illuminated by the Quran. For this reason, the Quran-centered evaluation of this and similar narrations is a scholarly necessity.

The Common Design Model Against the Evolution Hypothesis

Modern biology's most fundamental debates concern how to explain the diversity and complexity of living organisms. While the Neo-Darwinist evolution hypothesis explains this diversity through natural selection and random mutations, the common design model proposes that similar structures may stem from shared physical and biochemical necessities.

The Philosophical and Historical Background of the Evolution Hypothesis

Evolutionary thought should be evaluated not only as a biological hypothesis but also as the product of a particular philosophical tradition. Materialist philosophy — which seeks to explain nature solely through material factors — provided fertile ground for proto-evolutionary ideas even before Darwin. Yet prominent figures in the history of science — Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Cuvier, and Linnaeus — conducted their work with the aim of discovering a universe ordered by a creative intellect. Albert Einstein remarked that it is impossible to believe in a science without religion, while Max Planck expressed that anyone who takes science seriously will see that faith underlies its foundations. Within this framework, evolutionary materialism may be read not as a necessary outcome of science, but as an ideological choice. Darwin himself, in On the Origin of Species, listed serious shortcomings of his hypothesis under the heading "Difficulties of the Theory": the inadequacy of the fossil record, the inability to explain complex organs such as the eye through random processes, and the unclear mechanisms of instinct.

Fossil Records: The Absence of Transitional Forms

The most basic expectation of the evolution hypothesis is the existence of transitional fossils documenting the processes between species. Yet of the approximately 300 million fossils discovered to date, all belong to known species; the expected transitional forms have not been found. Paleontologist Derek W. Ager and Mark Czarnicki have explicitly stated that species appear suddenly in the fossil

record with no transitional forms present. American paleontologist R. Wesson noted that this gap is real and factual — that species generally remain stable for long periods and are replaced by new species through abrupt changes. This picture directly contradicts Darwin's model of gradual, continuous change.

The most striking example of this is the Cambrian Explosion, dated to approximately 520–530 million years ago. Invertebrate groups such as snails, trilobites, sponges, and starfish appear suddenly in the fossil record with no evolutionary connection to the preceding single-celled organisms. Some findings — such as the eye structure of trilobites — astound even today's most skilled engineers with their complexity.

The picture is similarly contradictory regarding human evolution. Louis Leakey's excavations at Olduvai Gorge uncovered fossils of Australopithecus, Homo habilis, and Homo erectus side by side in the same stratum, indicating these species could not have been ancestors of one another. Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard University summarized this situation by drawing attention to the existence of independent parallel lineages. A 800,000-year-old child facial fossil found at the Gran Dolina Cave in Atapuerca, Spain, possesses entirely modern human anatomy — findings that seriously undermine the evolutionary family tree of humans.

Fraudulent evidence historically invoked to support the evolution hypothesis also constitutes an important dimension of this debate. The fossil introduced in 1912 as "Piltdown Man" was a fabrication composed of an ape's jaw fused with a human skull; it was accepted in scientific circles for roughly 40 years before its forgery was exposed in 1949. "Nebraska Man," produced in 1922 from a single molar tooth, was similarly a product of fraud. Ernst Haeckel's deliberately altered embryo drawings appeared in textbooks for decades; both Haeckel himself and Neo-Darwinism's founder George Gaylord Simpson openly acknowledged this falsification.

The Limits of Natural Selection and Mutations

Natural selection and mutations — the two core mechanisms of the evolution hypothesis — reveal serious limitations upon examination. Colin Patterson, chief paleontologist at the Natural History Museum in London, stated that no one has ever produced a new species through natural selection mechanisms, nor has anyone come close. Observations of Galapagos finches show that species do not undergo unlimited transformation; rather, variations already present in their gene pool simply come to the fore under different environmental conditions. Molecular biologist Jonathan Wells has documented in detail that the famous moth experiments contained serious methodological errors and manipulations.

Regarding mutations, the vast majority of these changes are either harmful or add no new information to the genetic code. Examples such as antibiotic resistance are presented as evidence of evolutionary progress, but this actually represents existing genetic traits becoming dominant through environmental selection — no new genetic information is produced. The principle of genetic homeostasis shows that the genetic structure of organisms remains within certain limits that cannot be exceeded, a finding experimentally corroborated by researchers such as Luther Burbank and W. L. Johannsen.

Biological Complexity: Irreducible Systems

A significant portion of biological structures in living organisms contain systems composed of interdependent components that become completely nonfunctional if any single part is missing. This phenomenon of "irreducible complexity" creates grounds for arguing that such structures cannot be explained by gradual, random processes. The eye is a frequently cited example; the simultaneous performance of functions such as light detection, focusing, and image processing requires the co-presence of hundreds of components. The sonar system of bats represents a bioengineering achievement that modern technology has yet to fully replicate.

The bacterial flagellum has become the focal point of this debate: a molecular motor capable of 100,000 revolutions per second, powered by a proton gradient, composed of approximately 40 different proteins, and featuring a rotor-stator mechanism with reverse-rotation capability — a true display of engineering mastery. Information-theoretic analysis of the system reveals that the probability of a functional sequence for even a single 300-amino-acid protein is at the level of 10^{-380}; for the complete 40-protein system, this figure reaches $10^{-15.200}$. These values mathematically demonstrate the cosmological impossibility of random search mechanisms arriving at such functional structures within biological time scales.

The Complexity of the Cell and the Problem of the Origin of Life

One of the most fundamental dilemmas of the evolution hypothesis is that it leaves unanswered the question of how life began. Evolutionary scientist W. H. Thorpe described the cell as more complex than all machines humanity has ever built, emphasizing that no artificial cell has been produced despite high levels of technology. The probability that amino acids in a medium-sized protein molecule will align in the correct sequence is calculated as 1 in 10^{300}. Moreover, proteins assembling together is not sufficient on its own; all cellular systems must function simultaneously and in coordination.

Stanley Miller's 1953 experiment was long presented as evidence of the first amino acid synthesis, but subsequent research revealed two critical problems: the gas mixture used did not reflect the actual atmosphere of the primitive Earth, and the cold trap mechanism was an artificial apparatus absent in nature. Miller himself later acknowledged that the atmospheric composition was incorrect. The RNA World hypothesis, proposed in the 1980s, contains similar dilemmas; evolutionary biologist Leslie Orgel characterized it as "an impossible fairy tale."

Contradiction with the Second Law of Thermodynamics

The Second Law of Thermodynamics — one of the most robust laws in physics — establishes the inevitable tendency toward entropy increase (i.e., disorder) in closed systems. Einstein described this law as "the first law of all sciences." The evolution hypothesis, however, argues for precisely the opposite: that simple, disordered molecules form increasingly complex and organized structures over time. Evolutionists attempt to resolve this contradiction through the input of energy from the sun, but it is clear that a mere flow of energy cannot generate organization within

a system — just as fuel alone is not sufficient for an engine to run; a functional mechanism must also exist. George Stavropoulos has also stated that no complex organic molecule can arise spontaneously and is, by the requirement of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, doomed to decomposition.

The Common Design Model: Core Claims

The common design model interprets the findings with which the evolution hypothesis struggles from a different framework. At the heart of this model lies the following idea: similarity does not always reflect common ancestry; it may instead reflect the optimal solutions to shared physical constraints and functional necessities. Concrete examples of this principle exist throughout the history of technology. The wheel is a universal answer to the problem of transporting loads with low friction; wheel designs in Mesopotamia, China, and Mesoamerica independently arrived at the same physical law. Wing geometry offers a similar example: insect, bird, bat, and artificial airplane wings did not derive from one another — all are different applications of the same Bernoulli principle. The camera-eye structure has emerged independently in humans, octopuses, and certain invertebrates, reflecting the functional necessity of the laws of optical physics.

Within this framework, the universality of DNA can be interpreted through the argument of a common biochemical platform rather than common ancestry. The fact that organisms living on the same planet, under the same atmospheric conditions, and within the same water chemistry use the same building blocks, the same energy molecules, and the same cellular mechanisms may reflect functional necessity rather than genealogical connection. The 98–99% genomic similarity between humans and chimpanzees can likewise be evaluated as the same engineering response to the same environmental constraints — defined by the same atmospheric pressure, gravity, temperature range, and nutritional chemistry. The Windows and Linux analogy in the computing world supports this interpretation: both systems are designed for the same hardware platform, yet neither "evolved" from the other.

Information-Theoretic Analysis

Viewed through the framework of information theory, the mechanisms of the evolution hypothesis encounter serious mathematical difficulties. According to the functional information formulation developed by Hazen and colleagues, the information content of a functional sequence is proportional to the rarity of that sequence among all possible configurations. For a 150-amino-acid protein, while the total number of possible sequences is $20^{150} \approx 10^{195}$, even using the generous estimate of 10^{10} for functional sequences, the probability of arriving at a functional sequence remains at the level of 10^{-185}.

The role of natural selection in this context also reveals a critical distinction: selection eliminates among existing variations but does not perform a goal-directed search. Since new functions often require crossing a specific threshold, intermediate steps below that threshold provide no selective advantage, and the process stalls at that point. Manfred Eigen's error threshold concept also mathematically demonstrates that highly complex genetic systems cannot spontaneously increase

in a high-mutation environment. According to Michael Behe's multiple mutation analysis, the waiting time for even two simultaneous mutations required for a new function exceeds the total lifespan of many species; when three or more mutations are required, this duration rises to a biologically unreachable level.

Genetic Similarity and Phylogenetic Inconsistencies

One of the strong predictions of the common design model is that if similarity stems from functional necessity rather than genealogical connection, genetic similarity will not always correspond to a consistent evolutionary tree. Indeed, different gene families produce different evolutionary trees; the ribosomal RNA-based tree frequently conflicts with the mitochondrial DNA-based tree. Horizontal gene transfer — widespread especially in bacteria — also calls into question the "tree of life" metaphor, generating the need for alternative descriptions. The presence of "advanced" genes in "primitive" organisms, and "primitive" genes in "advanced" organisms, also produces anomalies that the evolutionary model must explain. The common design model treats these findings not as anomalies but as expected outcomes: the same function requires the same genetic solution in different organisms, independent of genealogical connection.

The Scientific Debate Environment and Methodological Evaluation

A scientific hypothesis is expected to be questionable, testable, and open to alternative explanations. Yet many scientists have noted that there are serious professional pressures against dissenting views within evolutionary circles. Lord Solly Zuckerman, an evolutionary scientist who spent years working on human fossils, concluded that no genuine evolutionary lineage exists and placed human evolution at the lowest level of scientific reliability. Henry Gee has also stated that the human evolution schema is largely a human invention based on assumptions.

The fact that researchers who question the evolution hypothesis are labeled "unscientific" and have their work blocked from publication suggests that dogmatic advocacy has replaced a genuine scientific debate environment.

The evolution hypothesis faces unanswered questions on many fronts — from fossil records to genetic data, from biological complexity to thermodynamics. The absence of transitional forms, the extraordinary complexity of the cell, the mathematical difficulty of proteins reaching functional sequences, and the tension with the Second Law of Thermodynamics all cast doubt on the hypothesis's scientific foundations. The common design model, meanwhile, offers a coherent framework that interprets similarities among living organisms not as the product of common ancestry but as the result of shared physical constraints and functional necessities. Independent discoveries in the history of technology, convergent solutions, and information-theoretic analyses constitute independent lines of evidence supporting this framework.

The biographies of leading figures in the history of science clearly show that science and the belief in creation do not necessarily exclude one another — on the contrary, deep scientific inquiry can often lead to following the traces that point toward

creation. For this debate to be conducted in a healthy manner, both models must be honestly evaluated against the totality of available scientific data, free from ideological bias.

The People of the Cave: Faith, Geography, and the Traces of a Universal Story

The People of the Cave (Ashāb al-Kahf) represents one of the most profound and mysterious narratives in Islamic culture and spiritual tradition. This story, recounted in Surah Al-Kahf — the 18th chapter of the Quran — is the epic tale of young men who, facing persecution for their beliefs, withdrew from the world and took refuge in a cave. Examined, interpreted, and reinterpreted through the lens of countless cultures over the centuries, this story remains alive and enigmatic to this day. Its captivating quality stems not only from the narrative itself, but from the layers of uncertainty that have accumulated around it. Questions such as the number of those who remained in the cave, the name of the dog that accompanied them, and the geographical location of the cave have been debated for ages — and the varying answers given to these questions are precisely what keeps the story vital and dynamic.

The Quran's Approach: Ambiguity as a Message

When examining the story of the People of the Cave, it is essential first to understand the Quran's own stance on the matter. In verse 22 of Surah Al-Kahf, Allah says:

"Some will say they were three, their dog being the fourth, and some will say five, their dog being the sixth — guessing at the unknown — and some will say seven, their dog being the eighth. Say: My Lord knows best their number. Only a few know of them. So do not argue about them except with a clear argument, and do not inquire of anyone about them."

This verse adopts a remarkably deliberate position. Rather than stating the number of the People of the Cave explicitly, the Quran enumerates differing views and then defers the matter to divine knowledge with the words: "My Lord knows best their number." This approach is not incidental. The Quran suggests that the true message of this story lies not in numerical precision, but in the depth of the lesson it imparts. The emphasis on avoiding excessive speculation and unnecessary dispute also points to the importance of epistemic humility in religious disagreement. Although this divine guidance has not managed to silence centuries of debate, it clearly illustrates what an approach faithful to the spirit of the story should look like.

The Question of Number: Three, Seven, or Eight?

Despite the Quran's position, Islamic scholars and commentators have advanced differing views on the number of the People of the Cave. Some narrations speak of three individuals, others take five or seven as their basis. Interpretations that include the dog in the count raise the figures to four, six, or eight. None of these debates has ever reached a definitive conclusion — nor could they, since the Quran itself has declared the matter to be among the unseen. Yet this ambiguity, far from weakening the story, has lent it a universal dimension.

The Dog's Name: Qitmir or Himran?

One of the intriguing elements of the story is the dog that accompanied the young men. The Quran acknowledges the dog's presence but does not give its name — a gap that narrations have attempted to fill. Some traditions give the dog's name as Qitmir, while others mention Himran. The name Qitmir in particular found a wide place in folk culture, appearing in prayers and even written on the envelopes of letters as a kind of talisman. The symbolic meaning of the dog's loyalty to its companions, and its sleeping alongside them in the cave, has been explored with great depth; the dog came to embody faithfulness, devotion, and steadfast companionship.

The Geography of the Cave: The Claims of 33 Cities

The geographical traces left by the story of the People of the Cave are remarkably vast. To date, more than 33 cities or regions around the world claim that the cave described in Surah Al-Kahf lies within their borders. This figure vividly illustrates how widely the story has resonated across the globe and how deeply different communities have forged connections with it.

Claims in Turkey

Turkey is among the countries that most fervently lay claim to the Cave of the People of the Cave. Four significant localities maintain their claims on historical and cultural grounds:

Afşin (Kahramanmaraş): The district of Afşin in the Mediterranean region is home to one of the strongest contending claims. The cave, held sacred by the local population for centuries, has been placed on UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List — a recognition that goes beyond local belief and constitutes an official acknowledgment of the site's historical and cultural significance.

Lice (Diyarbakır): In southeastern Anatolia, in the Lice district of Diyarbakır, there is also a cave attributed to the People of the Cave. The historical importance of this cave is supported by concrete documentation dating back to the 12th century. During the reign of the Artuqid ruler Malik Adil, the cave was renovated and an inscription was commissioned — a significant historical document proving that the cave was officially associated with the People of the Cave from the medieval period onward.

Selçuk (İzmir) — Ephesus: The cave near the ancient city of Ephesus in the Selçuk district of the Aegean region has a distinctive character: it is considered sacred not only by Muslims, but by Christians as well. Located at the foot of Panayır Mountain, a church was built over the cave. Uncovered during archaeological excavations conducted in 1927–1928, this site offers one of the rare examples of different faiths sharing the same sacred space — a tangible demonstration of the story's function as an interfaith bridge.

Tarsus (Mersin): In Tarsus, a district of Mersin province on the Mediterranean coast, a cave is also claimed to be that of the People of the Cave. The fact that Tarsus — known to history as the birthplace of Paul the Apostle — carries this claim serves as yet another reminder that this is a geography where different religious traditions intersect.

Other Claims Around the World

Beyond Turkey, various regions around the world also assert that they are home to the cave. Uyghur Muslims in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region identify a local cave as the one mentioned in Surah Al-Kahf. In the Middle East, a claim also arises from the Amman region of Jordan. The cave near Amman is regarded by certain Islamic scholars as a strong candidate, with archaeological finds in the area interpreted as supporting evidence. This geographical diversity also reveals how the story itself has traveled through history — wherever Islam spread, communities claimed the story as their own, and local beliefs and legends became intertwined with the narrative of the Cave.

A Universal Theme: Parallels with the Mahabharata

It is remarkably striking that themes similar to the story of the People of the Cave appear not only in Islamic literature, but in other religions and cultures as well. In the Mahaprasthanika Parva — the 17th book of the Hindu sacred text, the Mahabharata — the journey of five individuals who turn their backs on the world and their kingdom is recounted, accompanied throughout by a faithful dog. This parallel may be more than a coincidence. Renouncing worldly power, walking the path of faith, and a loyal dog serving as a symbolic companion on that journey — these are motifs that suggest different cultures, even independently of one another, tend to express similar human experiences through similar imagery. These universal themes are compelling evidence that humanity shares a common religious and philosophical subconscious.

The Spiritual and Cultural Legacy of the Story

The story of the People of the Cave carries a profound spiritual legacy that extends far beyond merely historical or geographical questions. At its core lie themes — faith, patience, trust in God, resilience in the face of oppression, and divine protection — that speak to people in every era. Throughout history, communities that faced injustice and persecution for their beliefs have found their own reflection in this story, interpreting the young men's retreat into the cave not as an act of flight, but as a divine embrace. The cave became not a symbol of fear, but of surrender and trust.

Another reason the story has endured for centuries is the particular ambiguity that preserves its mystery. The exact location of the cave is unknown, the number of the young men is not certain, and the dog's name is disputed. These uncertainties allow each generation to rediscover the story, to reflect upon it, and to connect it to their own lives.

The People of the Cave is an ancient narrative whose details — including the number of its protagonists and the location of its cave — remain disputed to this day; yet it is precisely these ambiguities that allow it to speak to every age and every culture. The Quran's stance on the matter is deeply meaningful: rather than providing a definitive answer, saying "My Lord knows best their number" steers people away from excessive debate and toward the essential message — the beauty of faith and surrender. The fact that more than 33 cities have claimed this cave, the existence of parallel motifs in the Mahabharata, the symbolic significance of the dog, and the

interfaith dimensions of the story all demonstrate that the People of the Cave is not merely an Islamic narrative, but a part of humanity's shared spiritual heritage. Wherever and in whatever culture this story appears, it reminds us of the same truth: faith is enough to illuminate a person even in the darkest cave.

Perception, Matter, and Existence: The Limits of Reality at the Intersection of Science, Philosophy, and Faith

The human mind has wrestled with the same question for thousands of years: Do the things we see, hear, and touch truly exist? Or are all these experiences the product of an invisible process operating behind a curtain? Modern neuroscience, quantum physics, and ancient philosophical traditions offer surprisingly similar answers to this question.

The Brain's Dark Workshop: The Science of Vision and Perception

Vision is the sense humans trust most. Yet this trust is built upon a profound illusion. Light reflected from an object passes through the eye's lens and falls onto the retina, forming an inverted, two-dimensional image. Rod and cone cells in the retina convert this light into electrical signals through chemical processes; these signals travel along millions of nerve cells to the visual cortex at the back of the brain. In a completely dark environment, receiving no light whatsoever, the brain processes incoming raw data and constructs a three-dimensional, colorful, moving world.

What is striking about this process is the following: the brain does not passively record the external world. According to the model modern neuroscience calls "Predictive Processing," the brain continuously generates predictions and interprets incoming sensory data by comparing it against these predictions. In other words, what we see is not a raw copy of the external world, but a model the brain constructs on the basis of prior experience, expectations, and inference.

Psychologist R. L. Gregory expressed this reality as follows: the inverted images arriving at our eyes are reconstructed in our brains as meaningful objects. When we watch children playing in a park, the image we see is essentially our brain's interpretation. German neurologist Hoimar von Ditfurth stated the same truth more sharply: what the eye sees is not "the world" but merely its image — and how closely that image corresponds to the original is open to debate.

Depth perception is also part of this illusion. The retina is two-dimensional; the sense of three-dimensionality is produced by the brain merging the slightly different images received by each eye and interpreting cues such as perspective, shadow, and motion. The techniques skilled painters use in their work — train tracks converging at the horizon, distant objects appearing smaller, shadows conveying depth — are in fact conscious imitations of the brain's own perceptual mechanisms.

Color, Light, and Sound: Phenomena That Do Not Exist in the External World

Modern physics shakes our intuitive perceptions even more fundamentally. Light consists of electromagnetic waves or packets of energy called photons. These waves and particles are not "brightness" or "illumination" in any familiar sense; they

are simply forms of energy at different frequencies. The light of the sun, the glow of a lamp, the color of a flower — none of these exist objectively in the external world. When photons reach the retina they are converted into electrical signals, and the brain interprets those signals as "light" and "color."

Color perception is particularly fascinating in this regard. The retina contains three types of cone cells sensitive to red, green, and blue light. The brain produces millions of shades of color as a result of these cells being stimulated in different proportions. As researcher Jeremy Nathans of Johns Hopkins University has noted, all a cone cell can do is capture light and report its intensity; it says nothing about color. Color arises from the brain's interpretation of that raw data. This is why the sea is not blue, grass is not green, and soil is not brown — these are products of the brain's interpretation of electrical signals as color.

Sound shares the same reality. In the external world there exist only vibrations of air molecules; when these vibrations strike the eardrum they are transmitted via nerves to the brain, where they are experienced as "sound." In the sense of touch, nerve endings at the fingertips convert surface properties into electrical signals. As philosopher Bertrand Russell emphasized, the sensation we feel when touching a table is in fact the electrical effect of electrons; if the same stimulation were delivered by other means, we could experience the same feeling without any table at all.

The senses of smell and taste complete this picture. Neurology professor Gordon Shepherd of Yale University explains that the nose serves merely as a channel; actual smell perception occurs in the brain. When airborne molecules interact with receptors in the nasal epithelium, electrical signals are generated and transmitted to the olfactory center. The smell of cake from a bakery, the aroma of a café, the freshness of a rose — all of these are perceptual constructions produced by the brain.

In the end, all the senses share a common truth: raw data from the external world is converted into electrical signals, the brain interprets those signals, and constructs the rich, colorful, multi-dimensional world we believe we inhabit. We never have direct access to the "actuality" of the external world; we are acquainted only with the models the brain produces.

Quantum Physics: The Dissolution of Matter

The solid, tangible sense of reality our senses present to us collapses entirely in the face of quantum physics' findings. The interior of the atom is almost entirely empty space. The subatomic particles that make up matter are not objects standing still in a fixed location, but waves of probability. According to the Uncertainty Principle formulated by Werner Heisenberg in 1927, the position and momentum of a particle cannot be measured simultaneously with full precision — and this is not due to the limitations of our measuring instruments but stems from the very nature of the particle itself. Before it is observed, a particle does not possess a definite location; at the moment of measurement the probability wave collapses and the particle appears somewhere.

Quantum physicist John Gribbin expressed this situation in the following words: it means that an electron cannot simultaneously have a definite position and a definite momentum; at any given moment the electron itself cannot know where it is and where it is going.

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Max Planck reached an even more radical conclusion: there is no matter as such; all matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particles of an atom to vibration, and behind this force we must assume the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind.

The statement of theoretical physicist Amit Goswami places the role of the observer at the center: if there is no conscious person looking at it, there is no object within the concept of space-time. This is one of the fundamental findings of quantum mechanics: an unobserved system has no objective position; observation constructs reality.

These findings show that the things we touch, see, and feel in ordinary life are not solid physical realities, but consist largely of energy and probability distributions.

Philosophy's Quiet Foresight: From Berkeley to Bergson

These scientific findings confirm realities that certain important figures in Western philosophy had intuited long before. George Berkeley argued in the 18th century that to exist is to be perceived: things exist only within our minds. To claim that an object continues to exist when it is not being perceived is, in Berkeley's view, an unfounded assumption.

Henri Bergson, in his work Matter and Memory, argued that the world is made of images and that these images exist only in consciousness. He emphasized that everything, including the brain, consists of images, and that the being which perceives these images is consciousness.

Bertrand Russell's view aligns with this line of thought: if matter is to be interpreted in general as a group of events, then this must be applied to the eye, the optic nerve, and the brain as well.

Neuroscientist Jeffrey Schwartz of the University of California articulates the fundamental difficulty of the matter with the following question: determining the location in the visual cortex where redness is formed falls far short of explaining our perception of red. Even the most detailed MRI images cannot explain what perception feels like as an experience. This is the point at which the science of perception hits a wall: how do nerve signals come to be transformed into subjective experience — into "that unique feeling of seeing red"? No satisfying answer to this question has yet been produced within a materialist framework.

The Enigma of Consciousness: Who Is Watching?

The eyes perceive light, the nerves carry the signal, the brain forms the image. But who watches this image? There is no physical screen inside the brain. Electrical signals concentrate in certain regions, but how a subject capable of experiencing

these signals comes into being cannot be explained. Philosophers have described this entity as "the ghost in the machine" or "the inner eye."

The infinite regress paradox pointed out by R. L. Gregory presents this problem with striking clarity: if there is an image inside the brain, another eye is needed to perceive it; if that eye also forms a new image, yet another eye is required, and this cycle extends to infinity.

Materialist philosophy cannot provide a satisfying answer to this question. Saying that consciousness is a complex function of the brain is not answering the question but merely renaming it. It is impossible to explain how joy, longing, wonder before beauty, and moral responsibility emerge from the electrochemical activity of a handful of proteins.

The Soul: An Answer Beyond Materialism

Islam has offered a clear answer to this question for centuries: the being that truly exists, that perceives, thinks, feels, and questions is the soul that God breathed into the human being. God first created the human body, then breathed His soul into it. This truth is expressed in verse 9 of Surah As-Sajdah: Then He shaped him and breathed His spirit into him, and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts.

In verses 28–29 of Surah Al-Hijr, the command for prostration given to the angels comes after the breathing of the soul, for the human being gains value with the soul. From this perspective the eyes are a window; it is the soul that looks through the window. The brain is a complex signal-processing organ, but the being that experiences those signals, attributes meaning, finds beauty beautiful, and bears moral responsibility is the soul.

In the words of Said Nursi: The eye is a sense through which the soul observes this world through that window.

According to this understanding, all sensory experiences — light, color, sound, scent, taste, and touch — are manifestations that God presents to the human soul. The brain is dark, yet the soul experiences a world of light. The brain is silent, yet the soul hears symphony. The brain is cold, yet the soul feels love, longing, gratitude, and wonder.

The Illusion of Perception and the Meaning of Existence

When all these scientific and philosophical findings are considered together, the picture that emerges is profoundly striking: throughout life, the human being experiences everything it sees, hears, touches, and tastes not directly, but through models produced by its own brain. It never has direct access to the actuality of the external world. The colors, sounds, and textures it perceives may have no one-to-one counterpart in the external world. The matter it considers solid consists largely of empty space. Even the objective existence of an unobserved object has become open to question.

This picture need not open the door to a troubling nihilism. On the contrary,

recognizing the limits of our perceptions can open us to a deeper reality. If everything we see is a model constructed by our brain, and if the being that experiences this model cannot be explained by any material function, then the essence of the human being lies somewhere far beyond matter.

The peace of the tranquil soul begins precisely where scientific explanations reach their limit: the being that looks behind the eyes, that hears beyond the ears, and that feels in the depths of the heart is not a product of matter, but a soul that derives its existence from God's spirit and was created to return to Him.

This broad perspective, stretching from the science of vision to quantum physics, from philosophy to theology, expresses a common truth in different languages: our perceptions are not direct copies of the external world; the brain constructs a model of reality by processing the electrical signals it receives. What we know as light, color, and sound in the external world do not exist objectively; they are the brain's interpretations. Matter is not as solid as it appears; it consists largely of empty space and probability. The objective existence of unobserved objects is open to question.

In the face of these findings, the most consistent and most profound answer is this: beyond the world of perception, there exists a being that experiences these perceptions, attributes meaning to them, and questions them. That being is the soul. The soul is the divine gift that God breathed into the human being. And this soul is the being that observes God's artistry through the eyes, hears His word through the ears, and feels His mercy through the heart. The world we see may be formed in our brains — but the being that sees, feels, and questions it possesses a reality too deep to be recorded by any brain scan.

On the Truth of Soul, Matter, and Existence

The soul is the being that uses the body — the one that sees through the eye, hears through the ear, feels through the heart. This subjective awareness that says "I see" to the images in the human brain, "I hear" to those sounds, is aware of its own existence and can say "I am I" — this is the soul that Allah has given to man. Said Nursi expresses this truth concisely: "The eye is a sense through which the soul observes this world through that window." That is, the eye is the window through which the soul looks out upon the world. The soul gazes through that window; and what it sees are the manifestations (tajalliyat) that Allah has created. The soul has no organ of its own. It feels as though it writes without having hands. It feels as though it walks without having feet. It feels as though it eats without having a mouth. The body is a vehicle the soul uses; it is not the soul itself. This truth aligns with what philosopher Bergson expressed in his work Matter and Memory: "The world is made of images; these images exist only in our consciousness; the brain itself is one of these images." Similarly, Bertrand Russell, in The ABC of Relativity, emphasizes that matter must be interpreted as a group of occurrences, and that this applies to the brain as well. That is to say, there is no solid, independent matter out there as we suppose. What exists are the images the soul observes.

The Difference Between Allah's Essence and His Manifestations

One of the greatest obstacles to understanding the matter of the soul is the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud (unity of existence), which identifies the Creator with His creation. According to this view, everything is Allah and Allah is everything. Yet this is a claim that is contradictory both logically and from a Qur'anic standpoint. The analogy of the painter and the painting makes this contradiction clear. The painter produces his work; what is reflected on the canvas is the painter's art, but it is not the painter himself. No color, no brushstroke on the canvas can see or contain the painter. One cannot say the painting is also the painter — for to say both part and whole exist and then to count them as one is an intellectual contradiction. Likewise, the universe that Allah created is the canvas of Allah's art; it is not Allah's Essence. The light radiating from the sun is not the sun itself. Allah's manifestations are the reflections of His names upon the realm of existence. Surah al-Qasas, verse 88, makes this distinction plainly: "Everything will perish except His Face." (Al-Qasas, 88)

Everything other than Allah's Essence will cease to exist. If the universe were a part of Allah, then when the part perishes, the whole would perish too. Yet Allah can annihilate everything other than Himself whenever He wills. Those who do not know how to read the book of the universe cannot distinguish the reader of the book, the book itself, and the author of the book — and they fall into the error of "mistaking them for one." The universe can only be read correctly in the light of the Qur'an.

One Soul and Multiple Windows

Souls are not plural; what is plural are the windows through which the soul looks — that is, the eyes. The soul is one, and it observes different tableaux through different windows, together with the perception of time. Our Prophet Muhammad in Mecca, Moses in Egypt, Jesus in Jerusalem — all of these are like tableaux of the one soul seen through different windows. Time does not pass. What passes are the images before the eyes. The tableaux are in motion and possess depth; yet in truth there is neither distance nor a place from which the tableaux are observed. In this exhibition hall, the only one gazing upon the tableaux is their Artisan. Allah contemplates His own art. He beholds His own infinite beauty in the tableaux He has created. But those tableaux are not Allah's Essence. In this gaze, there is only Allah and the human being. Outwardly, Allah and man — but in the deepest truth, only Allah. For the soul belongs to Allah. Allah's soul witnesses the reflection of Allah's names upon the realm of existence. "The one who looks, sees, listens, hears, speaks… in truth, it is only Allah."

The Human Being With Soul and Without Soul

According to traditional belief, every human being possesses a soul. Yet the Qur'an points to a different reality. Allah has chosen those of His servants who bear a soul. In this world there exist two kinds of human beings: those with souls and those without. Those without souls cannot see, cannot hear, cannot suffer, cannot think, and cannot reason. They have eyes — but there is no one behind those eyes looking. The Qur'an declares this plainly: "And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like livestock;

rather, they are more astray." (Al-A'raf, 179)

Those without souls are special beings created for the training and trial of the believers. Amit Goswami expresses this truth — which also corresponds to the observer effect in physics — as follows: "If there is no conscious person looking at it, no object exists within the concept of space and time." When a soul-bearing person looks, the denier speaks; when no one looks, the denier does not exist. The reason for their momentary existence is that a soul-bearing person is observing them. That those without souls will not suffer in Hell is understood through the following analogy: imagine a corpse thrown into fire. The corpse does not feel it, for it has no soul to feel it with. In the same way, a body that does not carry Allah's soul feels no pain in Hell either. Outwardly they appear to suffer; but inwardly they are nothing but an image — a lifeless body. Allah is not one who wrongs His servants (Al-Anfal, 51). He does not burn and torment a being to whom He has granted neither freedom of choice nor will.

The Signs of Being Without a Soul

A person without a soul cannot grasp the sufficiency of the Qur'an, cannot find the messenger of their era, or even if they find him, cannot understand what is being conveyed. They cannot internalize the matter of soul and matter; when the subject is raised, they sink into a deep silence. They spend their time in vain. They do not serve Islam; they cannot see the enemies of Islam. They do not give in charity — they hoard and accumulate wealth. They do not perform their acts of worship. They pay no regard to cleanliness. No matter how many times the same subject is explained to them in different ways, they cannot grasp it; they repeat the same few memorized phrases. They do not think according to the Qur'an; they evaluate events through the lens of traditionalist scholars. They cannot see that the mushrikeen are in shirk — on the contrary, they place them on a pedestal. However, it must not be forgotten: some signs of soullessness may appear in a believer. This does not make him soulless. The moral characteristics of the deniers are described in detail in the Qur'an; this description is presented as traits the soul-bearing must avoid. The Qur'an was revealed for the soul-bearing alone.

Death and the Change of Dimension

For the soul-bearing, death is not a passage from one place to another — it is a change in the quality and quantity of images. The clarity setting changes; the inner responses given to images are transformed. One begins to observe in composure and peace. The angel of death speaks to the soul-bearing person in a gentle manner, telling them that the life of this world has ended, and the believer's soul is taken with ease. The images of the Hereafter will be far clearer than those of this world — just as upon waking from a dream, the waking world appears more vivid than the dream. When the human being is resurrected in the Hereafter, they will clearly understand that the world was nothing but an image shown to them. For Allah, there is no past, present, or future. Allah is exalted beyond time and place. Infinite time has been decreed within an infinitely brief moment. Therefore, for the one who dies, there is no waiting; the Day of Judgment, the Hereafter, and the reckoning are experienced

immediately upon departing the dimension of time. For those without souls, death in the conventional sense does not occur. When not observed, they already do not exist. In Hell it is the same: the believers look at the screen and see the people of Hell, give thanks, and the screen closes. The moment the screen closes, Hell ends. Since the people of Hell have no souls, there is no one truly suffering.

The World of Opposites and the Wisdom of Trial

Allah has created a world of opposites. "Beautiful" gains meaning only through "ugly"; in a world where "beautiful" exists but "ugly" does not, the word "beautiful" loses all meaning and ceases to be a concept that stirs excitement. The deniers are a point of contrast created for the believers — like diamond and coal. The believer cannot learn what patience is without the oppression of the denier. If he were to enter Paradise without paying a price, he could not know that he had earned it. The denier's denial strengthens the believer's faith. The reason for their existence is denial; the reason for the believer's existence is faith. Iblis, too, is an instrument of education within this order. Iblis — soulless and virtual — is endowed with the ability to enter the intellectual world of the soul-bearing. The human being forgets that some thoughts passing through his heart are the whisperings of Iblis and supposes them to be his own. Yet when that voice is heard, taking refuge in Allah draws the person even closer to Him. It is Allah who has created the interference — and His purpose is that the human being should take refuge in Him.

Only Allah

The essence of all these truths gathers at a single point: in truth, only Allah exists. The soul belongs to Allah. The manifestations are the reflections of Allah's names. The one who looks, sees, hears, loves, speaks — ultimately, it is only Allah. "Praise be to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and brought into being the darknesses and the light." (Al-An'am, 1)

When the human being grasps this truth, they come face to face with the fact that the self is an illusion. This confrontation opens a gate of indescribable joy for the soul-bearing. When the self dissolves into the one soul, all troubles come to an end. The one who removes himself from the equation finds tranquility. For the only being worthy of praise, gratitude, and devotion is Allah — and in truth there is no other beside Him that one could praise.

The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Trustworthy Spirit in the Quran: A Critique of the Traditionalist Interpretation

The Problem of Parenthetical Glosses in Translation Tradition

One of the most contentious issues in the history of Quranic exegesis is the meaning of the concept of "spirit" (ruh) and whether it can be identified with an angel named Gabriel. The traditionalist Islamic understanding, drawing on hadith literature, has equated concepts such as Ruhul-Qudus, Ruhul-Amin, and Ruh with a revelation angel called Gabriel. Here, we examine how problematic this identification is in terms of the Quran's own internal coherence, addressing its linguistic, conceptual, and theological

dimensions.

A practice that has become widespread in Quranic translation work is the use of parenthetical explanations, ostensibly to assist the reader. However, this practice — particularly when the concept of "spirit" is involved — directly embeds an exegetical opinion into the translation text, distorting the Quran through the translations themselves. Writing "Gabriel" in parentheses whenever Ruhul-Qudus, Ruhul-Amin, or Ruh appears is not a translational choice; it is the imposition of a specific theological presupposition onto the text. The Quran was not revealed with parenthetical expressions. The translator's task is to convey the word God chose exactly as it is, preserving the richness of that word's semantic universe. Yet an intervention such as "Ruhul-Qudus (Gabriel)" directs the reader toward a predetermined conclusion from the outset and closes off the possibilities of meaning offered by the Quran's own linguistic structure. This approach is a concrete example of the traditional exegetical understanding — rooted in hadith narrations — overriding the Quranic text itself.

The concepts of Ruhul-Qudus, Ruhul-Amin, and Ruh are used in the Quran within an entirely different climate of meaning. Surah An-Nahl, verse 102, makes this distinction with exceptional clarity:

> "Say: The Holy Spirit has brought it down from your Lord with truth, to strengthen those who believe, and as guidance and glad tidings for those who submit."

In this verse, the subject who brings down the revelation is Ruhul-Qudus. God does not say here "Gabriel brought it down." The traditionalist interpretation, however, places hadith narrations before the Quran and ignores this distinction.

The Verse of the Night of Power and the Evidence for the Spirit-Angel Distinction

Surah Al-Qadr, verse 4, demonstrates through the Quran's own linguistic structure that the spirit and the angels are separate beings:

> "The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, for every matter."

If the concept of "spirit" referred to an angel named Gabriel, this verse would produce a meaningless distinction of the form "the angels and the angel." By mentioning the angels and the spirit together, the Quran declares that the two belong to separate categories. When the rules of definiteness and coordination in Arabic are observed, it becomes clear that the being denoted by er-ruh does not belong to the class of angels. Accordingly, this verse of Surah Al-Qadr is Quranic proof that the Spirit points to a reality distinct from Gabriel or the general category of angels.

The "Trustworthy Spirit" in Surah Ash-Shu'ara and the Nature of Revelation

Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verses 193–194, uses the following expression when describing how revelation descends:

> "The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down upon your heart, that you may be of the warners."

Here, emphasis is placed on the revelation descending upon the heart of our Prophet Muhammad. The heart in the Quran is frequently defined as the center of comprehension, faith, and divine inspiration. The Trustworthy Spirit's (*Ruhul-Amin*'s) bringing the revelation directly to the heart speaks of the touch of God's Spirit upon the human spirit, rather than the verbal transmission of a physical angelic messenger. The attribute amin in the expression Ruhul-Amin defines trustworthiness and fidelity to the trust, which is entirely fitting as an attribute of God's Spirit.

The Etymology of the Word "Jibril" and Its Theological Dimension

When the Arabic origin of the word "Jibril" is examined, it is seen to consist of two components: jabr and iyl. The linguist Raghib al-Isfahani conveys that the root jabr carries the meanings of "one who compels, one who mends what is broken, one who reforms." The Lisan al-Arab dictionary, under this entry, also emphasizes God's attribute al-Jabbar — meaning "the One who brings to pass what He has decreed, who performs the most perfect restoration." Iyl, meanwhile, is a name meaning "God" in ancient Arabic and Semitic languages, sharing the same root as the Hebrew "El." This etymological analysis points to the fact that "Jibril" originally bears the meaning of "God's reforming power, God's restorative revelation." The restoration of communities' faith and social fabric, correcting deviation and directing toward truth, is accomplished through God's revelation. From this perspective, Jibril moves away from being an anthropomorphic angelic figure and becomes a conceptual expression defining the reforming function of divine revelation within societies.

Ruhul-Qudus: The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God

The word qudus appears in the Quran together with the concept of spirit and carries the meanings of "being exalted, being pure, being holy." Accordingly, the literal meaning of the expression Ruhul-Qudus is "the Holy Spirit, the Pure Spirit, the Sacred Spirit." This designation directly defines the Spirit of God, for holiness belongs to God and His Spirit bears this holiness. The foundational source upon which the traditionalist interpretation relies when establishing the equation "Ruhul-Qudus = Gabriel" is not the Quran but hadith narrations. Yet within the Quran's own linguistic structure, the attribute qudus is an adjective qualifying the spirit, and it points to the revelation being brought down by God's Spirit. An angel cannot be the source of holiness; holiness can only be given to it by God. For this reason, identifying the expression Ruhul-Qudus with an angel is inconsistent both linguistically and theologically.

The concepts of ruh, Ruhul-Qudus, and Ruhul-Amin in the Quran belong to a far deeper and more integrated semantic universe — one that cannot sustain being identified with an angel named Gabriel in the manner assumed by traditionalist exegesis. The verse of Surah Al-Qadr that cites the angel and the spirit separately, the verse of Surah Ash-Shu'ara that describes the revelation descending upon the heart, and the verse of Surah An-Nahl that attributes the revelation to Ruhul-Qudus are the Quranic proofs of this truth. The parenthetical imposition of "Gabriel" by traditionalist exegesis does not originate from a Quran-centered reading but from an epistemological preference that places hadith narrations before the Quran. To

understand the Quran through the Quran itself requires reading the concepts that God chose to describe the attributes of His own Spirit with the richness of meaning He chose for them. This reading remains more faithful to both linguistic coherence and the internal consistency of the Quran.

Time, Space, and Human Consciousness: A Journey from Physics to Spirituality

Time has stood at the center of one of humanity's deepest questions since the beginning of existence. How long have we been here? Has the past truly been left behind? Is the future something that does not yet exist, or does it already exist somewhere? These questions are not merely philosophical curiosities — they represent a multilayered field of inquiry where physics, psychology, and spiritual understanding intersect.

Time appears to us both as an objective phenomenon in the universe and as a subjective experience within human consciousness. At first glance these two dimensions may seem to run in parallel, but on closer examination the difference between them proves to be remarkably striking. In physical reality, time does not follow a fixed and absolute flow; it varies depending on the observer's speed, position, and the gravitational force of the surrounding environment. Yet the human mind always perceives time as an orderly, linear process flowing from past to future. Examining these two different conceptions of time together greatly helps us grasp where humanity stands in the universe and what meaning our existence carries.

Einstein and the Relativity of Time: A Reality That Is Not Absolute

One of modern physics' most revolutionary discoveries is the proof that time is not absolute. The architect of this discovery, Albert Einstein, demonstrated at the beginning of the 20th century through his Special and General Theories of Relativity that time possesses a far more flexible and far more relative structure than we had imagined.

The Special Theory of Relativity reveals that for an observer moving at speeds approaching the speed of light, time slows down — a phenomenon known as time dilation. An astronaut embarking on a space voyage, for example, experiences time at a much slower rate compared to someone remaining on Earth. Upon returning from a long journey, far more time may have passed on Earth than for the traveler. This is not merely a theoretical calculation; it is a reality actively accounted for in the design of precision systems such as GPS satellites today.

The General Theory of Relativity, meanwhile, addresses the effect of powerful gravitational fields on time. Near a black hole, in an environment where gravity is extremely concentrated, time comes nearly to a standstill. In a more ordinary example, a person living on Earth's surface experiences time ever so slightly differently from someone at a much greater altitude, where gravity is marginally weaker. With this theory Einstein treated time and space not as independent entities but as components of a four-dimensional structure we call spacetime.

The "block universe" model, which emerges as a natural consequence of this

understanding, carries a deeply unsettling proposition: the past, the present, and the future all exist simultaneously. Different observers may have different definitions of "now." The concept we call "this moment," in other words, is not a universal instant shared by everyone but a relative cross-section that changes according to the observer, their position, and their velocity. From this perspective time does not flow like a river; it is instead a whole that exists with all its dimensions together, frozen within a four-dimensional structure.

Quantum Mechanics: The Time of Probabilities

While Einstein's theories of relativity revolutionarily redefined the large-scale structure of time, quantum mechanics looks through an entirely different window at how time operates at a far smaller scale — the world of particles. One of quantum mechanics' most striking features is the principle of superposition: a particle can exist in multiple states simultaneously as long as it is not observed. At the moment of observation these possibilities collapse and the particle settles into a single state. This phenomenon is not limited to a particle's position or velocity; it also encompasses temporal probabilities. In other words, a quantum system can exist across multiple temporal realities before being observed.

This finding suggests that time possesses not only a physical but also a probability-based structure. The observer changes the equation; the observer shapes reality. The brain is, in a sense, part of this process. At the macro level — in our everyday lives — the reason we perceive time as unidirectional is that the brain continually reduces these multiple quantum-level possibilities to a single reality. This is called decoherence. Our minds select only one from among the infinite possibilities arriving from the environment, thereby constructing a coherent, linear experience.

A striking conclusion follows: human consciousness is a mechanism that takes time from its chaotic quantum-level structure and transforms it into an orderly, intelligible flow. We actually live only one of thousands of existing possibilities, and even as we do so we remain unaware of this fact.

Time in the Human Mind: A Linear Fiction or a Necessary Order?

In direct contrast to the complex, relative, and probability-based structure of time in the physical universe, the human mind experiences time in an extremely orderly and linear fashion. This linear perception of time stretching from past to future is not an abstract philosophical preference but a structure produced jointly by biological, neurological, and psychological processes.

The stream of consciousness is the foundation of this structure. The human mind makes sense of events in the environment by placing them in a particular sequence. Without this sequencing it would be impossible to adapt to environmental changes, to avoid dangers, and to survive. Linear time perception is in this sense a necessity — it protects us from a complex reality and enables us to cope with the world.

Memory and identity constitute the emotional and meaning-laden dimension of this structure. What we have experienced in the past determines who we are. Memories

are not merely information stores; they are the building materials of our identity. The future, on the other hand, holds the individual's goals, hopes, and plans. The capacity to think about the future is one of the most fundamental features that distinguishes humans from other living beings. In this way the past and the future are connected to one another through a bridge that exists in the present moment.

Psychological time goes far beyond objective time. Everyone has experienced how quickly a pleasant moment passes and how long a tedious or painful one drags on. This demonstrates that time is not a purely physical quantity — that our emotional state, our level of attention, and our inner condition profoundly alter how we perceive time. The present moment is the cross-section in which reality is felt most intensely and most vividly. The individual's emotional state, past memories, and expectations about the future all coexist within the present moment.

The Qur'an and the Relativity of Time: A Universal Truth in the Light of Revelation

When physics' and psychology's efforts to make sense of time meet with spiritual and religious understanding, an extraordinarily profound picture emerges. The Qur'an, the foundational source of Islam, contains many verses that draw attention to the relative nature of time. In the 52nd verse of Surah Al-Isra the following expression appears: "On the Day He will call you, and you will respond with His praise, and you will think that you remained only a little." This verse underscores how limited the human view of worldly life is. An entire lifetime, when viewed from the perspective of the Hereafter, fits into an exceedingly short span. This relative brevity of time does not diminish the value of earthly life; on the contrary, it reminds us of how significant every moment is.

In the 45th verse of Surah Yunus a similar scene is depicted: "And on the Day He will gather them, as though they had not remained in the world except for an hour of the day, they will know each other." Although people have lived in different eras, when they come together on the Day of Judgment they will greet one another as if they had been separated for only a very short time. This is a powerful allusion to the limited perception of time in human consciousness.

Islam's understanding of time does not merely emphasize time's brevity; it also treats time as the ground of spiritual responsibility. Time is an entrustment for the human being, and how it is used is a matter for which an account will be rendered in the Hereafter. This understanding views time not as a passively flowing river but as a living space in which meaning is to be produced, worship performed, and good deeds done.

Past, Present, and Future: Separate or Intertwined?

Human consciousness experiences time by dividing it into three distinct segments: past, present, and future. Yet these three segments are far more intertwined than they appear.

The past is not merely a heap of frozen memories buried in the depths of history. The traces of great figures who lived in the past — prophets, thinkers, and leaders —

remain alive today.

The present moment is the living bridge among these three periods. The accumulated wisdom of the past manifests in present decisions; present decisions in turn prepare the ground for the future.

The future, though it may appear to have not yet occurred, continues to be shaped by every action taken in the present.

The block universe model of physics adds a remarkable depth to this picture: the past, the present, and the future may all exist simultaneously in the knowledge of God. The human being experiences only a small cross-section of this infinite knowledge. This understanding is in profound harmony with belief in divine decree — everything was ordained in eternity and manifests one by one within time.

Consciousness, the Soul, and Beyond Time

As it becomes clearer how flexible and relative time is in physical reality, the relationship of human consciousness to that reality grows ever more mysterious. Is consciousness merely a biological process? Or is it a mode of perception? In Islam, consciousness is the manifestation of the soul within the material body. The soul is not subject to time; it belongs to a dimension that transcends time. The human being is thus a singular entity that carries both dimensions within itself — matter and soul, time and eternity.

This is why the human being both lives time as a physical reality and strives to transcend it. In art, in prayer, in love, in self-sacrifice, the human being pushes against the boundaries of time. The role quantum physics assigns to the observer is also deeply thought-provoking in this light. Without an observer, quantum systems remain indeterminate; observation determines reality. This points to the fact that the material world cannot be explained by matter alone, and that consciousness and observation shape reality. At this point science and spiritual understanding achieve an unexpected meeting.

Seeking Meaning Beyond Time

Time is relative and flexible in the physical universe, linear and orderly in the human mind, and the ground of responsibility and the search for meaning in spiritual understanding. These three layers do not exclude one another; on the contrary, they complement one another.

While Einstein's theories prove that time is not absolute, quantum mechanics brings to light time's probability-based structure. Human consciousness organizes this complexity to produce a livable reality. The Qur'an points far beyond this reality, reminding us of time's brevity in human perception and of the infinite knowledge that belongs to God.

In the final analysis, time is not merely a physical dimension — it is a multilayered domain in which the human being makes sense of their own existence, identity, and place in the universe. The lessons of the past, the awareness of the present, and the

hope of the future exist in continuous interaction. And perhaps truly understanding time requires transcending it — that is, living within time while thinking beyond it.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Religious Domain: Limits, Risks, and Principles of Proper Use

Artificial intelligence today offers effective support across many areas, including written text generation, rapid access to information, editing, and analysis. However, the question of how and to what extent AI should be used in a field like religion — where depth of meaning is extraordinarily high and the nuances of context and language are critically important — is a matter that demands careful thought. This piece examines the risks of using AI in the religious domain, the principles that must be observed, and the framework for its proper use.

Core Principle: AI Should Be No More Than an Editor

The healthiest framework for defining AI's role in religious research is this: AI should be no more than an editor in the religious domain. This principle does not mean AI should be excluded entirely; rather, it points to the need for its role and boundaries to be clearly defined. With its human-like language generation and analytical capabilities, AI can serve as a functional assistive tool in religious research just as it does in many other fields. Yet if this use is not evaluated within a framework of foundational principles, it can lay the groundwork for erroneous religious conclusions, flawed rulings, and harmful guidance.

The Data Source Problem: Unreliable Input, Unreliable Output

The majority of widely used AI systems today are those that access current internet data. These systems may draw from content of questionable reliability, shaped by sectarian or ideological biases. While this may represent an acceptable level of risk in some fields, in religion the consequences can be far more severe. AI is a system that operates entirely on data. It can produce correct results only to the extent that the data it is fed is accurate, unstripped of context, and undistorted. But the more diverse and uncontrolled the data sources, the greater the margin for error. In a field like religion — where centuries of differing interpretations have accumulated and distortion is an ever-present risk — the likelihood of AI producing inaccurate or context-free information is extremely high.

What makes this even more alarming is that AI can present false or even fabricated information as though it were fact. This does not remain a simple informational error; it can become a danger that distorts the very essence of religion, causes individuals to build their beliefs on faulty foundations, and produces serious deviations at a societal level.

The Solution: Specialized LLMs and Classical Arabic-Based Training

To overcome — if not entirely eliminate — this problem, AI systems used in the religious domain must be fed from controlled, reliable, and field-specific sources rather than from current and contradictory internet content. For this purpose, specially developed Large Language Models (LLMs) should be preferred over general

-purpose systems.

The question of language carries particular importance here. The Quran is regarded as the pinnacle of classical Arabic. Modern Arabic cannot fully reflect the lexical depth, linguistic structure, and literary subtleties of the Quran. For this reason, AI systems working on religious texts must be trained on classical Arabic. An LLM trained on the Quran will be capable of producing far safer and more meaningful results in this domain.

User Competence: No Matter How Powerful the Tool

Even the most advanced LLM trained on the most accurate data will inevitably lead to misunderstanding or distortion of the information it produces if the person using it lacks sufficient religious knowledge. When AI begins to be used as an authority in areas as fundamental and nuanced as deriving religious rulings, interpreting verses, or exegesis, it can both prevent individuals from grounding their faith on solid foundations and lead to the corruption of religion's original message.

For this reason, religious content produced by AI must be reviewed by individuals who are well-versed in the Quran, who reject hadith, who consider the Quran sufficient, and who are competent in this field. The uncritical acceptance of every AI-generated text as correct by someone lacking knowledge carries extremely serious risks.

Legitimate Areas of AI Use

The risks outlined above do not mean that AI should never be used in the religious domain. On the contrary, when kept within appropriate boundaries, AI can offer valuable conveniences in this field. Legitimate and safe areas of use can be summarized as follows:

- Text editing and proofreading: AI can be utilized to correct spelling errors, punctuation mistakes, and grammatical irregularities.

- Organizing ideas: Supporting a researcher in conveying their thoughts in an orderly and coherent manner.

- Alternative phrasing suggestions: Helping to express the same idea in a different and more accessible way.

- Rapid access to sources: Facilitating access to relevant references during the research process.

- Technical text analysis: Analyzing the structural and linguistic dimensions of a text.

These forms of use keep AI in the true sense of an editor. If a person competent in religious matters has deficiencies in expression or writing skills, making use of AI for these technical aspects is both possible and reasonable. Yet even here, responsibility lies entirely with the user, because the religious message contained in the text is a matter not merely of technical editing but of serious scholarly scrutiny.

Conclusion

Correctly positioning AI in the religious domain is the key to benefiting from this technology to the greatest extent with the least risk. For this correct positioning, four fundamental conditions must be simultaneously present:

1. The AI system used must be a specialized LLM trained on classical Arabic and Quran-based data.

2. Current and contradictory internet sources must be avoided.

3. Users without Quranic knowledge must be prevented from independently deriving religious rulings through AI.

4. AI must be used solely for the purpose of supporting research; the final judgment must always be left to a person who is well-versed in the Quran and considers it sufficient.

In conclusion, AI should be used in the religious domain not to issue fatwas or derive rulings, but as a tool for supporting research processes, enabling rapid access to sources, and handling technical text-processing tasks. When the right model, the right sources, and the right user are present together, AI can become a genuinely useful instrument in this field. However, in any environment where any one of these three elements is missing, AI risks becoming a source of harm rather than benefit.

The Question of Prophet Noah's Tomb: Historical Claims, Geographic Diversity, and a Quran-Centered Evaluation

Prophet Noah, one of the most ancient and venerated prophets in Islamic history, is introduced in the Quran as a great messenger who conducted a long and arduous mission of preaching. The Quran addresses his life in considerable detail — his conflicts with his rejecting people, the miracle of the flood, and the construction of the ark are all recounted with clarity. Yet within this remarkably detailed narrative, not a single line addresses his death, his place of burial, or his tomb. This silence has, throughout history, provided fertile ground for tomb claims attributed to Prophet Noah across numerous regions — claims shaped sometimes by religious reverence, and sometimes by the shadow of worldly interests.

Prophet Noah: The Great Messenger Described by the Quran

The Quran identifies Prophet Noah as one of the ülü'l-azm (resolute) messengers. His story appears in many surahs, including Hud, Yunus, Nuh, Al-Mu'minun, and Ash-Shu'ara. The Quran itself recounts how he warned his people night and day, in private and in public, at both individual and communal levels — and how his people stopped their ears, even pressing their fingers into them to avoid hearing him. Surah Nuh offers the most vivid portrayal of this scene. The regional flood event is described in the Quran in detail as one of the greatest divine interventions in human history: the building of the ark, the salvation of the believers, the destruction of the disbelievers, and the ark coming to rest on al-Judi (a blessed, fertile place) once the waters receded — all of these scenes are inscribed in the Quran's verses. Yet regarding what

kind of life Noah led after the flood, where he lived, and where he was ultimately buried, the Quran is entirely silent. This silence should not be regarded as coincidental, but as a deliberate divine choice.

Tomb Claims Advanced Throughout History

Despite the Quran's silence on this matter, tomb structures attributed to Prophet Noah have emerged across the Islamic world, some becoming pilgrimage sites for centuries. These claims are known to exist at no fewer than seven distinct geographic locations.

The Tomb in Cizre: One of the most widely known claims is the structure located in the Cizre district of Turkey. However, this structure is strikingly different from traditional tomb architecture in its appearance — its long, tunnel-like form resembling a funnel sets it sharply apart from conventional shrine buildings. Nevertheless, having attracted visitors for centuries, this site continues to exist as a tangible expression of popular devotion to Prophet Noah.

The Tomb in İdil/Ocaklı Village: In Ocaklı Village, a settlement of the İdil district of Şırnak, another claim to Noah's tomb was raised in 2023 by a figure named Mehmet Emin Bozkuş. This structure, said to be approximately 7 meters in length, remains confined to the belief of only a handful of local individuals and has not gained wider acceptance. The locality of the claim and the weakness of its basis reveal just how fragile a foundation it rests upon.

The Shrine in Nakhchivan: Nakhchivan — whose name means "Noah's City" — stands out in regional tradition as a city directly associated with Prophet Noah. The shrine there reflects a deep-rooted belief held in the collective memory of the local population, namely that Noah lived on these lands and was buried here. This belief is profoundly intertwined with Nakhchivan's cultural identity and enhances the city's symbolic significance.

The Shrine in Kerak: According to some accounts, Prophet Noah's tomb is located in Kerak, within the present-day borders of Jordan, where a visited shrine is said to exist. However, this claim lacks any solid historical or source-based foundation.

The Tomb Near Kufa: Some Shia sources state that Noah's tomb is located near Kufa. This region is also reported to host shrines attributed to Caliph Ali and other prophets, making Kufa a significant center of sanctity in the Islamic world. Yet this claim, like the others, remains no more than contested.

The Tomb in Lebanon/Karahun: A tomb attributed to Prophet Noah is also said to exist in the Karahun region near Baalbek in eastern Lebanon. The area's ancient history and archaeological significance have allowed this claim to take root within a particular atmosphere.

The Claim Within the Masjid al-Haram: In some traditional narratives, it is asserted that Noah's tomb lies within the Masjid al-Haram. While this claim is nourished by deep reverence for Islam's holiest site, it is devoid of any verifiable basis.

Dimensions and Symbolic Interpretation

It is noteworthy that both the Cizre and İdil tombs are described as approximately 7 meters in length. This measurement may be associated with the conception of an extraordinarily long lifespan and imposing physical stature attributed to Prophet Noah. The depiction of tombs belonging to prophets or saints as unusually large — a pattern found in cultures beyond Islam as well — points to a universal archetype of sacralization. Rather than reflecting historical reality, these dimensions may be better understood as concrete manifestations of a mythological sense of greatness shaped within the popular imagination.

The Underlying Dynamics: Why So Many Tombs?

The existence of so many tomb claims for a single prophet, spread across such distant geographies, demonstrates that the matter cannot be explained by religious motivation alone. Several intersecting dynamics underlie this plurality.

Economic and Social Interests: Sacred sites have throughout history become focal points that attract visitors, stimulate local economies, and draw broader attention to a region. Living near — or administering — a shrine attributed to a great prophet like Noah has represented concrete material gain for local communities. This picture suggests that such claims have at times been nourished more by worldly calculation than by religious devotion.

Political and Cultural Legitimacy: Sacred sites have historically served not only as religious institutions but as instruments for generating political and cultural authority. Associating a region with an ancient prophetic tradition strengthens both its place within history and its identity in the present. In this regard, the shrines attributed to Noah may be read as products of regional identity construction.

Collective Memory and Folk Legend: The tendency of communities to claim sacred histories and give them spatial, tangible form constitutes the most natural source of such claims. Oral tradition and folk culture have, over time, elevated these claims to the status of fact, allowing them to be passed down from generation to generation without being subjected to critical scrutiny.

A Quran-Centered Evaluation

The Quran's silence regarding the burial place of Prophet Noah should be understood not as an incidental omission but as a conscious divine choice. The Quran explicitly states that it conveys everything necessary for the salvation of its servants — Surah Al-An'am, verse 38, stands as the foundational expression of this principle. If the location of Noah's tomb held any decisive importance for faith, worship, or moral life, this information would necessarily have been included in the Quran. Similarly, hadith literature falls short of providing any reliable, unambiguous narration on this matter. This demonstrates that all of the aforementioned claims are devoid of solid religious grounding and are based on rumors generated within popular culture. From a Quran-centered perspective, one must be extremely cautious about passing judgment on matters of the unseen. Information absent from the Quran generates no religious

obligation; such claims remain at the level of opinion, not knowledge. For Muslims to observe this distinction clearly is essential both for protecting their faith from superstition and for remaining faithful to the Quran's illuminating guidance.

Seeking His Traces Not in Shrines, but in His Life

The tomb claims attributed to Prophet Noah are spread across a vast geographic expanse and have been shaped by a range of distinct social dynamics. None of these claims are supported by the Quran or reliable hadith sources. The great majority are products of the collective imagination of communities, local interests, and the need for political legitimacy. Yet the true legacy of Prophet Noah lies not in which soil his bones became part of, but in the spirit of the centuries-long mission of preaching he carried out, in the depth of the message he bore, and in his unshakeable devotion to the belief in the oneness of God. What is of value before God is not knowing the coordinates of a prophet's tomb, but comprehending, internalizing, and living out the message that prophet carried. The real test is to seek the traces of the prophets not in shrines, but in our own lives.

Reliefs of Footprints Attributed to Our Prophet Muhammad: An Assessment from the Perspectives of Historical Authenticity and Monotheism

Throughout history, the line between truth and fiction in the realm of religious and cultural heritage has at times become blurred. One of the most striking examples of this ambiguity is the footprint reliefs attributed to our Prophet Muhammad, displayed today in various parts of the world. These artifacts — presented as "the Prophet's footprint" in numerous mosques, shrines, and museums from Istanbul to Jerusalem, from Delhi to Cairo — may appear to carry profound religious significance at first glance, yet they raise serious questions from both historical and theological standpoints.

Historical Authenticity: The Origins of the Artifacts

Our Prophet Muhammad passed away in 632 CE. Every single footprint relief attributed to him was produced centuries — even millennia — after this date. This fundamental historical fact renders the authenticity of these artifacts questionable from the outset.

The six footprint reliefs displayed at Istanbul's Topkapı Palace emerged in the aftermath of Sultan Selim I's Egyptian campaign in the 16th century, during which various objects were brought to Istanbul. The example at the Eyüp Sultan Mosque was also shaped during the same period or somewhat later, between the 16th and 18th centuries. The footprint at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem dates to approximately half a century to a century after the Prophet's death, during the Umayyad period. The example found at the Jama Masjid in Delhi, India, was commissioned in the 17th century by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. In Egypt, examples from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods exist in Cairo; the best known among them is the pair at the Qaitbay Mausoleum, believed to date to the 15th century. Similar reliefs dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries can also be found in Morocco, Algeria, and Pakistan.

All of these artifacts are reliefs carved into durable materials such as stone, marble, brick, or bronze — and not a single one belongs to the era in which the Prophet himself lived. Furthermore, neither the Quran nor the early sources narrating the Prophet's life contain the slightest evidence that his footprints were ever taken and preserved.

Why Were They Produced?

Understanding how these artifacts came into existence also sheds light on why they were produced. Throughout history, states, dynasties, and religious institutions have turned to religious symbols in order to consolidate their political legitimacy, establish spiritual influence over the populace, and reinforce their power by endowing certain sites with an aura of sanctity. This reality becomes far clearer when the transfer of "sacred relics" to Istanbul is considered within the context of strengthening the Ottoman claim to the caliphate. Similarly, the construction at the Dome of the Rock bears the imprint of Umayyad politics. In short, these reliefs are not the products of religious reality, but of political calculation, cultural necessity, and the endeavor to cultivate a perception of holiness among the people.

The Quranic Perspective: Monotheism and the Attribution of Sanctity to Objects

Beyond the historical dimension, what makes this issue truly critical is its profound contradiction with the core teaching of the Quran. The Quran is built upon the principle of tawhid — the absolute oneness and uniqueness of God — which categorically rejects attributing sanctity to any human being, object, or form. The Surah of Saba states: "Say: Call upon those whom you claim besides Allah! They do not possess even an atom's weight in the heavens or on earth." (34:22) The Surah of Al-Nahl makes the purpose of sending messengers explicit: "We sent a messenger to every nation: Worship Allah and avoid false gods." (16:36)

These verses emphasize that all messengers, including our Prophet Muhammad, are merely carriers of the divine message — not the entities to which that message points. Messengers are conveyors; what is sacred is the message they bring, not their personal belongings, physical traces, or even their physical existence. Accordingly, loading divine meaning onto a shape carved in stone or marble runs directly counter to the spirit of the Quran.

Unconscious Imitation and the Danger of Innovation (Bid'ah)

At this point, one might ask: why did Muslims adopt this practice? The answer lies largely in a form of traditionalism disconnected from the Quran. Throughout history, Islam has intersected with diverse cultures and geographies, and in the process has at times, unwittingly, incorporated the belief practices of surrounding cultures. Just as communities in ancient times attributed sanctity to stone, tree, or animal, some Muslims — as in this example — have taken to sanctifying physical objects and forms. This does not reflect a distinct mode of social behavior so much as it reveals a deep-seated human tendency: the need to make the invisible and abstract tangible and concrete.

However, regardless of how understandable this tendency may be, from a Quranic perspective the practice constitutes a clear bid'ah — an innovation added to religion after the fact, with no basis in revelation. Moreover, this innovation goes beyond a harmless cultural habit; it nourishes an understanding that directly undermines the belief in tawhid.

All footprint reliefs attributed to our Prophet Muhammad are artifacts produced centuries after his death, driven by political and cultural motivations. They possess neither historical reality nor physical authenticity. More importantly, the sanctity attributed to these objects is incompatible with the understanding of monotheism taught by the Quran.

The religion Allah has taught us rests not on objects, but on principles and values. The duty of believers is to turn to the Quran with a gaze cleansed of cultural sediment, and to understand and honor our Prophet Muhammad not through the objects associated with him, but through the message he delivered. Sanctity is not inscribed in stone; it resides only in the word of Allah and in the heart that turns toward Him.

Blood Donation and Cupping (Hijama): A Medical, Ethical, and Health Perspective

When it comes to human health, it is of great importance that the methods used are grounded in scientific foundations. The advances offered by modern medicine today bring evidence-based practices to the forefront. In this context, blood donation stands out as an extremely important practice — both for individual health and societal benefit. Cupping therapy (hijama), on the other hand, is a traditional method with historical roots but is considered a practice with limited and debated medical effects.

1. Blood Donation: A Life-Saving Practice Recognized by Modern Medicine

Blood donation is one of the most fundamental and indispensable practices in modern medicine. It plays a life-saving role in surgeries, accidents, cancer treatments, and many serious illnesses.

Key benefits of blood donation:

- Saves lives: Provides direct support to patients in need of blood.

- Enables regular health screening: Hemoglobin levels, infections, and general health status are assessed through pre-donation tests.

- Sterile and safe: Performed under controlled and hygienic conditions in healthcare facilities.

- Scientifically proven: Its effects have been researched and its safety and benefits have been clearly demonstrated.

- Provides societal benefit: One person's donation can save multiple lives.

In this respect, blood donation is considered not only an individual act but also a

social responsibility.

2. Medical Limits and Precautions for Blood Donation

Although beneficial, blood donation must be done consciously. There are some points that require particular attention, especially over the long term:

Risk of low ferritin:

- In people who donate blood frequently and regularly, iron stores (ferritin) may decrease over time.

- A decline may be observed around the 25th donation.

- The risk of developing chronic ferritin deficiency may increase after the 30th donation.

Hemoglobin is measured, but ferritin generally is not:

- For this reason, looking only at hemoglobin levels is not sufficient.

Regular follow-up is necessary:

Long-term donors are advised to get:

- Annual complete blood count (CBC)

- Serum ferritin measurement

Iron supplementation if needed:

- In cases of ferritin deficiency, support should be received under medical supervision.

The important point here is that an act done with good intentions should not come at the cost of neglecting one's own health.

3. Cupping (Hijama): A Traditional Method and Its Medical Limitations

Cupping is a traditional method based on drawing blood through a vacuum after making small incisions on the skin. It has historically been widely used in some cultures.

Some effects attributed to cupping:

- Temporary relief from back, neck, and lower back pain

- Reduction of stress

- Placebo effect

- Endorphin release

- Increased superficial circulation

However, these effects are generally considered to be:

- Temporary

- Limited

- Not conclusively supported by scientific evidence

The "Dirty Blood" Claim

The claim that cupping removes "dirty blood" — one of its main justifications — is not medically valid. From the perspective of modern medicine:

- Blood is not classified as "dirty" or "clean."

- The body's purification is carried out by the liver and kidneys.

- There is no need to draw blood externally to achieve "detoxification."

4. Risks of Cupping

When applied incorrectly, cupping carries serious risks:

- Infection

- Contagious diseases such as hepatitis

- Scarring

- Excessive blood loss

- Complications arising from non-sterile environments

For this reason, even if the application itself seems safe, it can lead to serious health problems when not performed to medical standards.

5. The Quranic Perspective: The Principle of Preserving Life

In the Quran, protecting and preserving human life is one of the most important principles. The following verse is frequently cited in this context:

> "Whoever kills a soul — unless as punishment for murder or spreading corruption in the land — it is as if he has killed all of humanity. And whoever saves a life, it is as if he has saved all of humanity." (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:32)

This verse clearly demonstrates how great a value saving a life holds.

In this context, blood donation can be viewed as:

- An act of saving a life

- A component of social solidarity

- A moral and humanitarian responsibility

6. Balance: Health, Responsibility, and Awareness

The most sound approach to blood donation involves upholding two core principles simultaneously:

1. Social responsibility

- Saving lives through blood donation

- Taking on a humanitarian and ethical duty

2. Individual health

- Monitoring ferritin and iron levels

- Taking breaks when necessary

- Not putting one's health at risk

When this balance is maintained, both the individual and society benefit.

Blood donation is a scientifically proven, life-saving practice recognized by modern medicine, and it holds great ethical and humanitarian value.

Cupping, while it may provide temporary relief for some individuals, is a traditional method with limited medical evidence and carries risks when improperly applied.

Therefore, the most sound approach is to:

- Prefer scientifically validated and reliable methods

- Support life-saving practices such as blood donation

— while not neglecting individual health parameters in the process.

When this balance is achieved, one both contributes to human life and preserves one's own health.

Quran-Centered Understanding of Islam: Purification from Superstitions and the Guidance of Reason

Allah has revealed a book to guide humanity. This book contains principles to govern both individual and social life. Yet throughout history, as today, these principles have at times been stripped of their essence and replaced with superstitions, rituals, and tools of exploitation. A Quran-centered understanding of Islam holds that beliefs and practices must be grounded solely in Allah's book. This approach is both a religious necessity and a matter of rational consistency. Today, discourses such as "healing verses," "blessed hours for accepted prayers," "recitations of the Names of Allah for provision," and "prayers for finding a spouse" are spreading under the guise of religion, exploiting people's beliefs. The word "healing" in the Quran, contrary to what many assume, refers not to the treatment of bodily illness but to the relief of spiritual and moral ailments. Ignoring this distinction amounts to distorting the Quran's holistic message. Surah Al-Isra, verse 82, states:

> "And We send down of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy for the believers." (Al-Isra 17:82)

The concept of "healing" in this verse has been taken out of context and interpreted as the cure for physical diseases. Yet the healing referred to is purification from polytheism, superstition, deviant beliefs, and moral corruption. Considering the era in which the Quran was revealed, the greatest sickness of Arab society was idolatry, the ignorance of the pre-Islamic age, and moral decay. The Quran brought healing to these spiritual and intellectual ailments. The same message is clearly expressed in Surah Yunus, verse 57:

> "O mankind! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord, a healing for what is in the breasts, and a guidance and mercy for the believers." (Yunus 10:57)

When this verse is examined carefully, it becomes clear that the healing is directed specifically at "what is in the breasts" — the heart. No passage in the Quran instructs reciting a specific verse for physical conditions such as cancer, migraines, or paralysis. The Quran is not a medical textbook; it is a divine guide that educates the human soul, nourishes the intellect, and cultivates the conscience. Turning to medicine for bodily illness is not contrary to the spirit of the Quran — quite the opposite, it is entirely consistent with it. For the Quran repeatedly encourages reason and observation.

Prayer: A Wish List or an Expression of Servitude?

Among the general public, prayer is often perceived as a kind of "wish list." The idea that reciting certain prayers at certain times a certain number of times will grant your wishes is incompatible with the Quran's understanding of prayer. In the Quran, prayer is not a tool for making requests — it is an expression of servitude. It symbolizes a trust in Allah, a turning toward Him, and a contentment with His decree. Yet trust in Allah does not mean passive waiting in place of precaution, effort, and reason; rather, it is a confidence maintained alongside these things. On this point, Surah An-Najm, verse 39, is particularly illuminating:

> "And that there is not for man except that for which he strives." (An-Najm 53:39)

This verse establishes the inescapability of personal effort and labor. A person reaps what they sow, lives by what they produce, and thinks with what they learn. Prayer does not change this reality; prayer is an inner state and orientation that makes striving meaningful and connects the person to Allah. Nowhere in the Quran is there a directive such as "recite this prayer and your provision will increase," "repeat this verse and your affairs will go well," or "recite this Name and you will find a spouse." Such claims rest neither on revelation nor on reason.

The Exploitation of the Names of Allah

The beautiful Names of Allah — the Asma ul-Husna — are presented in the Quran so that human beings may come to know Allah, understand His attributes, and shape their lives in light of that understanding. The Quran states:

> "And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them." (Al-A'raf 7:180)

The phrase "invoke Him by them" describes turning to Allah knowingly, with understanding and internalization of His names. Yet today this verse is interpreted in an entirely different way: repeating certain names a set number of times in exchange for material gain. Statements such as "Recite the name Ar-Razzaq a thousand times and your provision will open up" or "Repeat Al-Fattah this many times and doors will open for you" have no basis whatsoever in the Quran — they are fabrications. Understanding Allah's names and carrying the values they embody into one's life is indeed far more valuable than attending a management course or learning a skill to find work; but these two are not alternatives to one another. The Quran connects the human being to Allah and at the same time calls them to be active in the world.

Merchants of Religion and the Quran's Warning

Today, a segment of society systematically exploits the public under the appearance of religious authority. Those who say "I recite healing verses," "I know the accepted hours of prayer," "I teach the prayer for provision," or "I perform rituals for finding a spouse" exploit people's beliefs for material gain. This is precisely the picture the Quran condemns in sharp terms:

> "And do not sell My verses for a small price, and fear Me alone." (Al-Baqarah 2:41)

Selling the verses of the Quran "for a small price" means turning them into a commercial instrument. Attaching a healing verse to a fee, a prayer ritual to a payment, a recitation of a Divine Name to material profit — these are concrete forms of this exploitation. Such individuals have transformed Allah's book into a tool that serves themselves rather than others. Moreover, the social cost of this exploitation is immense. People turn to those who "recite healing verses" instead of seeing a doctor for real illnesses. Instead of genuinely seeking employment, they perform "prayers for provision." Instead of truly studying for exams, they recite "prayers for acceptance." These tendencies cause harm to the individual both in this world and in a religious sense.

Work, Reason, and Success: The Quran's True Prescription

There is a saying told humorously among the people: "The only ones who achieve success without effort are hens sitting on their eggs." Though this statement captures a truth in a lighthearted way, it falls short. For even a hen's laying eggs depends on the right environment, adequate nourishment, and time. No production occurs unconditionally. The roadmap the Quran offers to humanity is this: think, observe, work, produce, be ethical, and trust in Allah. All of these elements complement one another; none can substitute for another. The Quran repeatedly calls upon human beings to reason:

> "Will you not think?", "Will you not use your reason?"

These calls command that religion be nourished by reason, that faith be strengthened through understanding. Religious practices that bypass the intellect, require no effort, and operate like formulas stand in direct contradiction to this call.

Provision comes from Allah — this is a theological truth. But its worldly counterpart is effort, knowledge, diligence, honesty, and production. Wealth arises from commerce and production. Success is the fruit of disciplined and intelligent work. The Quran presents this as both a theoretical and a practical principle.

Returning to the Quran

A Quran-centered faith requires grounding one's understanding of religion solely in the book Allah has revealed. This necessitates purification from every form of addition, invented ritual, and religious exploitation. In the Quran, there is no list of specific verses that cure bodily diseases. There is no schedule of hours during which prayers are accepted. There is no verse commanding that the Names of Allah be repeated a set number of times in expectation of provision. There is no guidance of the kind "recite this prayer and you will find a job." All of these are discourses designed to exploit human vulnerability and belief. Prayer is a sincere expression of servitude and it holds genuine value. Worship is a meaningful act that connects the human being to Allah. But these things cannot replace work and thought; they do not function like formulas in real life; they cannot be turned into commerce. The Quran's call is clear: reason, work, produce, be ethical, and trust in Allah. Religion exists not to disable the intellect, but to strengthen it. A true understanding of the Quran liberates the human being both in this world and beyond — it is fed not by exploitation, but by knowledge and labor.

Linguistic and Biological Analysis of the Expression "Ṭayran Ebâbîl" in Surah Al-Fil

The 105th chapter of the Quran, Surah Al-Fil, recounts the destruction of the companions of the elephant by beings sent by God. However, the expression "ṭayran ebâbîl" in verse 3 of the surah has, over the centuries, been incorrectly identified in popular tradition with a specific bird species — namely the common swift (Apus apus), a member of the family Apodidae. This identification carries serious problems from both an Arabic linguistic and a biological standpoint.

Linguistic Analysis of the Expression "Ṭayran Ebâbîl"

Verse 3 of Surah Al-Fil reads as follows:

>وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيل

> "And He sent against them birds in flocks." (Al-Fil, 105:3)

A correct understanding of the two key words in this verse is of great importance.

ṭayran (طَيْرًا)

The first word, ṭayran, is derived from the root verb ṭāra (طَارَ), meaning "to fly." Its nominal form is ṭayr (طير), meaning broadly "a flying thing." Its form in the verse is in the accusative (manṣūb), functioning as the object of the verb. In Arabic, this construction adds connotations of abstraction and plurality. Therefore, translating this word simply as "birds" narrows the semantic richness of the text. The word's scope is broad enough to encompass "any kind of being capable of flight."

ebâbîl (أَبَابِيلَ)

The second and more debated word, ebâbîl, has an extremely rare plural structure in the Arabic language. It has no singular form and means "in swarms, in groups, in successive waves." The meaning embedded in the word describes not a biological classification, but a mode of arrival — organized, uninterrupted, and dense. This structure carries a sequential emphasis in Arabic, conveying the sense of "coming continuously and one after another."

Used together, these two words make clear that the beings referred to in the verse are not birds of a specific species, but rather flying entities arriving in an orderly and successive manner. Accordingly, the most accurate translation of the verse is: "And He sent against them flying beings in successive swarms."

This translation excludes the species-specific attribution implied by the popular phrase "Ebabil birds." The Quran here does not describe a bird species; it depicts a divine event, characterizing its nature and multiplicity.

Apus apus Known as the "Ebabil Bird" and Its Place in Folk Culture

The bird commonly referred to as the "Ebabil bird" in popular tradition is scientifically classified as Apus apus. This name is derived from the Ancient Greek a-pous, meaning "without feet," as the bird has extremely short legs and almost never lands. Adult Apus apus individuals spend the greater part of their lives in the air — eating, sleeping, and even mating on the wing. Taxonomically, the species belongs to the order Apodiformes, sharing its group with hummingbirds and treeswifts. Although it resembles swallows in appearance, there is no true genealogical relationship between Apus apus and swallows; the resemblance is merely a superficial physical similarity acquired through exposure to similar ecological pressures in overlapping habitats.

In Turkey, these birds are given various names in folk parlance: "flying swallow" and "sky bird" are among the most common. In some Kurdish communities, they are referred to as "the black pilgrim." None of these names, however, derive directly from the Quranic expression "ṭayran ebâbîl." They are products of folk culture shaped by local observation and belief.

The label "Ebabil bird" most likely arose through the following semantic shift: people learned of the event in Surah Al-Fil; they interpreted the word ebâbîl in the surah as the name of a bird species; and over time, they attached that name to these birds, which migrate in flocks and fly in clusters. Yet this naming was shaped not by the linguistic reality of the Quran, but by the straightforward interpretation of folk memory.

Biological Evaluation: Do Birds Throw Stones?

Later in Surah Al-Fil, it is stated that these flying beings dropped hardened stones upon their enemies:

ترْمِيهِم بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيل>

> "Pelting them with stones of sijjīl..." (Al-Fil, 105:4)

This detail makes it even more difficult to identify these beings with any biologically known bird species. To date, no bird species has been documented in the scientific literature as intentionally throwing stones for purposes of defense or attack. Certain species do interact with stones, but exclusively in the context of feeding:

- Bearded Vulture (Gypaetus barbatus): Lifts large bones or tortoises into the air and drops them onto hard rocks. This is a relatively rare example of "tool-like use" among birds, but its purpose is to break open food — not to attack.

- Woodcock (Scolopax): Uses its bill to push aside stones, leaves, and clumps of earth while foraging on the ground. Again, this is a foraging reflex, not an aggressive behavior.

These examples clearly demonstrate that the stone-throwing attack scene described in the Quran does not correspond to any known bird behavior. Attempting to place the events narrated in the verse within a biological framework would therefore be an approach contrary to the nature of the text.

Conclusion

The expression "ṭayran ebâbîl," within the linguistic fabric of the Quran, points not to a specific bird species but to flying beings sent with divine power, arriving in successive swarms. The identification of these beings with Apus apus finds no adequate linguistic basis in the original Arabic of the Quran, and furthermore does not align with the known biological behavior of that species.

The concept of the "Ebabil bird" arose from a simple and natural interpretation of folk culture. There is, however, a significant difference between respecting that interpretation and presenting it as the sole and definitive explanation of the Quran's meaning.

The Quran — Islam's primary reference — does not name a specific species in this verse; rather, it depicts the nature, multiplicity, and organized structure of a divine intervention. In conclusion, attempting to interpret Surah Al-Fil through the lens of Apus apus both obscures the linguistic subtlety of the Quran and conflicts with biological reality. For a correct understanding, fidelity to the Arabic structure of the verse is essential, and the expression "ṭayran ebâbîl" must be evaluated within its own linguistic and contextual integrity — independent of the names produced by folk memory.

An Evaluation of the Üveysi Dhikr in Light of the Quran's Core Principles

At the center of Islamic belief lies tawhid — absolute faith in the oneness of Allah. This faith requires worshipping Allah alone, seeking help from Him alone, and turning only to Him. Dhikr (remembrance) is a concrete expression of this understanding of tawhid, commanded repeatedly in the Quran, which clearly states that the remembrance of Allah brings tranquility to hearts. Yet throughout history, certain Sufi movements have given rise to practices that deviate from this pure understanding of

dhikr. One of the most notable examples is the "Üveysi dhikr," a practice attributed to Uwais al-Qarani, in which a spiritual connection is claimed to be established with his soul. Here, we will examine this practice through the lens of the Quran's principles.

The Meaning and Scope of Dhikr in the Quran

The Arabic word dhikr, meaning "to mention, remember, or keep in mind," is used in the Quran in the context of remembering Allah, glorifying Him, and turning toward Him. Allah says: "So remember Me; I will remember you" (Al-Baqarah, 2:152), establishing a reciprocal relationship in dhikr — one side being the servant, the other being Allah alone. Nowhere in the Quran is there any ruling prescribing dhikr in the name of any messenger, companion, or saint.

Furthermore, Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 21 states: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often." This verse does not mean that dhikr should be performed in the Prophet's name; rather, it commands the remembrance of Allah while presenting the Prophet as a guide and model. Therefore, the essence of dhikr is always turning to Allah — dhikr cannot be performed for or in the name of any individual's soul.

Uwais al-Qarani: Historical Figure or Legendary Character?

Uwais al-Qarani is a figure said to have lived in Yemen during the early period of Islam and to have believed in the Prophet without ever meeting him, despite being his contemporary. For this reason, some sources refer to him as "the best of the Tabi'in." While most accounts about him appear in hadith literature, the authenticity of these narrations is considered debatable, with some classified as weak.

The Quran is the primary source of belief and worship for Muslims. Uwais al-Qarani's name does not appear in the Quran, nor is there any verse suggesting that he held a special spiritual status or could guide people after his death. Developing acts of worship and dhikr practices around a figure constructed through non-Quranic narrations contradicts the fundamental methodology of the religion. The Quran demands that everything believed in be based on clear and definitive proof, and it repeatedly emphasizes that conjecture cannot be substituted for truth.

The Üveysi Dhikr: Its Nature and Contradiction with the Quran

In the practice known as the Üveysi dhikr, it is claimed that a spiritual connection is established with the soul of Uwais al-Qarani or another figure, and that spiritual training and divine grace (fayd) are received from them. This claim directly contradicts at least three fundamental Quranic principles.

First, the matter of the unseen (ghayb). The Quran states unequivocally that only Allah knows the unseen: "Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah" (An-Naml, 27:65). To claim that a person's soul communicates with living people after death is a direct violation of the boundaries the Quran has drawn concerning the unseen.

Second, the condition of the dead. The Quran clearly states that the dead cannot hear

the living: "You cannot make the dead hear" (Fatir, 35:22). This verse establishes that the dead are closed off from consciousness and intervention, demonstrating that claims of communicating with souls are incompatible with the reality defined by the Quran. Therefore, the claim that the soul of Uwais al-Qarani — or anyone else — can spiritually inspire the living contradicts this definitive Quranic ruling.

Third, seeking help from Allah alone. Surah Al-Fatihah, verse 5 states: "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help." This verse forms the very essence of Islam's understanding of worship. Turning to any person's soul for spiritual training, divine grace, or guidance contradicts this fundamental principle and undermines the belief in tawhid. The only source capable of meeting a Muslim's spiritual needs and drawing them closer to Allah is Allah Himself.

The Matter of Bid'ah and Practices Without Evidence

In Islam, the domain of worship is shaped only within the boundaries established by the Quran. Forms of worship not found in the Quran are considered bid'ah (innovation). Evaluating the Üveysi dhikr in this context, it becomes clear that it has no Quranic foundation whatsoever. No such practice is mentioned during the time of the Prophet or among the generation of the Companions; this form of dhikr emerged much later in Sufi circles.

The Quran commands: "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you and forgive your sins" (Al Imran, 3:31). Following the Prophet means not inventing forms of worship he never taught, but rather walking the path he showed and regarding the Quran as sufficient. The Üveysi dhikr has no foundation in the Quran whatsoever, placing it in the category of practices that are not religiously binding — and indeed, that the Quran rejects.

The Principle of Tawhid and the Danger of Shirk

The most fundamental principle of Islam is to avoid associating partners with Allah. Shirk is not limited to worshipping idols made of stone or wood; attributing Allah's attributes to any servant or created being also falls within the scope of shirk. Knowing the unseen, hearing a person's prayer, guiding them, and meeting their spiritual needs are divine attributes belonging to Allah alone. Attributing these qualities to the soul of a deceased person means transgressing the boundaries of tawhid.

The Quran is absolutely clear on this: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills" (An-Nisa, 4:48). This ruling reveals how grave a matter shirk is in terms of belief. Any practice that attributes divine qualities to the soul of Uwais al-Qarani and positions him as a spiritual intermediary is in open contradiction with this principle and carries the danger of shirk.

The Position and Critique of the Üveysi Dhikr in Sufi Tradition

Üveysism is essentially the Islamic rebranding of the Buhriyan movement — followers of Buhri Esved, who is claimed to have lived in the time of the Prophet Moses before

Islam — that infiltrated Islamic practice under the name "Üveysism." The Üveysi dhikr in particular is a practice widely employed in the Qadiriyya order and certain other Sufi brotherhoods, and is today being spread in various forms by Muharrem Karabay. In these traditions, the concept known as "Üveysism" holds that a disciple can be spiritually trained without the guidance of a physical sheikh, by establishing a spiritual connection with the soul of a past saint.

Although this understanding has gained a certain place in Sufi literature, it harbors serious problems when evaluated from a Quranic perspective. First and foremost, Sufi traditions, however deep-rooted and extensive they may be, cannot legitimize a practice that contradicts the Quran's clear rulings. The prevalence or age of a tradition does not guarantee its compatibility with the Quran. Indeed, the Quran criticizes blind adherence to inherited traditions: "And when it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'Rather, we will follow that upon which we found our fathers'" (Al-Baqarah, 2:170). This principle makes it obligatory for every generation to re-examine the established practices of their time against the Quranic standard.

The Path of Correct Dhikr

For a Muslim, the correct form of dhikr is clearly outlined in the Quran: glorifying Allah, praising Him, invoking His name, performing prayer, reciting the Quran, and making supplication are the permitted and commanded paths of dhikr.

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Ar-Ra'd, 13:28). This verse makes the source of peace unmistakably clear: neither the soul of a saint, nor the divine grace of a sheikh, nor the name of a historical figure can bring tranquility to hearts. The sole source of this peace is the dhikr of Allah — turning directly to Him.

The Prophet also taught dhikr within this framework. In his teaching, there is no practice of performing dhikr in his own name or in the name of any other individual. The Prophet always placed Allah at the center of dhikr, positioning himself as a guide and messenger on the path to Allah — a guidance accomplished solely through the Quran and the remembrance of Allah's name.

Uwais al-Qarani may have been a person who lived in history and was known for his devotion to Allah; however, this does not legitimize a dhikr practice that turns toward his soul and claims that spiritual training is received through him. The Quran's principles on this matter are absolutely clear: dhikr is performed for Allah alone, the dead cannot communicate with the living, the unseen belongs to Allah alone, and every form of worship must have a Quranic foundation. The Üveysi dhikr meets none of these criteria. It has no basis in the Quran, nor is it compatible with the principle of tawhid. On the contrary, this practice attributes divine qualities to a created being, presupposes that spiritual communication with the dead is possible, and legitimizes turning to a source other than Allah in dhikr.

All of these elements make it necessary to characterize this practice as a bid'ah that contradicts the definitive rulings of the Quran. The path of a Muslim is clear: to turn in dhikr to Allah alone, and to live a pure life of faith within the boundaries the Quran

has drawn, free from unsupported practices. This path will bring peace to the heart in this world, and be a means of salvation in the hereafter.

A Critique of Friday Hadith from a Quran-Centered Approach

In Islam, Friday is traditionally regarded as a special day, and it is exalted through various narrations attributed to it. However, the conformity of these narrations with the Quran must be questioned. Certain hadith that link Friday to matters of the unseen — such as the creation of Adam, his entry into and expulsion from Paradise, and the timing of the Day of Judgment — contain serious contradictions.

A hadith found in Sahih Muslim states:

> "The best day on which the sun has risen is Friday: Adam was created on it, he entered Paradise on it, and he was expelled from it on it. The Hour will also come to pass on Friday." (Muslim, Jumu'ah, 18)

According to this hadith, Friday is associated with the most significant events in human history and is thereby elevated. Yet no such day-specific knowledge appears in the Quran. The Quran does not specify when Adam was created — what day he was created, when he entered or was expelled from Paradise — all of this falls entirely within the realm of the unseen (ghayb). In this context, linking a day of the week to such extraordinary events amounts to presenting knowledge that Allah has not revealed as though it came from Him, which contradicts the Quran:

> "Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah." (Al-Naml 27:65)

Similarly, certain hadith confine the timing of the Day of Judgment to a specific day and hour:

> "At sunset, at the time of the evening, the Hour will come to pass." (Bukhari, Tafsir Surah 6/9; Tirmidhi, Da'awat, 98)

Such narrations give the impression that the Hour can be pinned to a specific time. Yet the Quran explicitly states that the timing of the Hour belongs to Allah alone and is among the unseen:

> "They ask you about the Hour — when will it come? Say: Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He will reveal it at its time." (Al-A'raf 7:187)

> "Indeed, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah." (Luqman 31:34)

These verses make clear that the Hour cannot be tied to any specific day, hour, or observable moment. While the Quran declares absolute uncertainty regarding the timing of the Hour, modern scientific data further calls the reliability of these narrations into question.

Today, there is a 26-hour difference across the world's time zones. The furthest behind is UTC−12:00, and the furthest ahead is UTC+14:00 — a difference that technically spans a full day and two hours.

For example:

- When it is Friday at 10:00 AM in UTC−12,

- It is simultaneously Saturday at 12:00 PM in UTC+14.

In this case, statements such as "the Hour will come on Friday" or "the Hour will come at sunset" lose all universal validity. For across the world, different days are being experienced simultaneously, and the sun sets at different times in different regions. If the Hour is to come on a Friday, which time zone determines that? And how could the Hour be said to have come "on Friday" when people in other regions are living through a different day entirely?

This reality demonstrates that the day-centered depictions of the Hour found in certain hadith contradict both the Quran and scientific reality. Such narrations, which seek to glorify Friday, were fabricated for the purpose of elevating that day in the eyes of the people. In the Quran, Friday is mentioned only in the context of the Friday prayer. Associating Friday with unseen events such as Adam's creation, his entry into Paradise, and the timing of the Hour amounts to attributing a sanctity to the day that exceeds its actual standing — presenting a holiness that does not exist in the religion as though it does, which ultimately harms the essence of the faith.

According to the Quran, knowledge of the unseen belongs to Allah alone. Providing the creation of Adam, his entry into and expulsion from Paradise with information about specific days, hours, and times — and binding the Hour to a particular day — amounts to claiming knowledge of the unseen. Such narrations have no place in the Quran and furthermore conflict with scientific data.

A Quran-centered perspective reveals that such narrations did not originate from divine religion, but were fabricated through social and traditional motivations. Muslims should understand their religion only as the Quran has declared it, and refrain from passing judgment concerning the unseen.

Despite the Quran's absolute emphasis on uncertainty regarding the timing of the Hour, certain hadith bind it to a specific day — even to a specific time of that day — which presents serious problems not only religiously but also in terms of physical reality. The understanding of time established by modern physics renders these narrations invalid both rationally and scientifically.

According to Einstein's theory of relativity, time is relative. Time is not a universal, fixed flow — it is experienced differently depending on the observer's velocity and the effect of gravity. This reality has demonstrated that time is not lived uniformly everywhere at once. This understanding of the structure of spacetime shows that different times can be experienced simultaneously in different geographical locations — which means that statements like "the Hour will come on Friday" cannot be absolutely true, and in fact become meaningless.

Furthermore, the "block universe theory," or the four-dimensional spacetime model, holds that past, present, and future exist simultaneously. In this model, time is not merely a forward-flowing process but a complete whole, present from beginning to

end. That is, the event we call the Day of Judgment is already embedded in the structure of the universe from the moment of creation. Even if human beings experience it at a particular moment, all times are simultaneous in the sight of Allah:

> "Indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count." (Al-Hajj 22:47)

This verse makes clear that time functions in Allah's sight in a manner entirely different from our perception. For Allah, there is no distinction between yesterday, today, and tomorrow — all things exist simultaneously within His knowledge. Therefore, binding the Hour to "such and such a day, such and such a time" runs entirely counter to both the Quran's conception of universal timelessness and the understanding of time established by modern physics.

According to the block universe view, all events in time — both Adam's creation and the coming of the Hour — have already been determined and brought into existence within the divine plan. Human beings merely live through their portion of this plan. The emphasis found throughout the Quran — "Allah does what He wills, when He wills" — reveals that time operates under the control of an absolute will that functions beyond ourselves:

> "When He intends a thing, His command is only that He says to it: 'Be!' — and it is." (Ya-Sin 36:82)

Moreover, those who make such claims are in contradiction even with themselves — for even Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi stated that time is relative and that all things exist in the eternal present moment.

In conclusion, narrations that fix the Hour to Friday, or even to a specific time of day, stand in opposition to the Quran's understanding of the unseen, to scientific theories of time, and to the absolute knowledge of Allah. Attributing sanctity to a time period such as Friday and identifying unseen events with that day constitutes attributing to Allah knowledge that He has not revealed — which is both epistemologically false and a matter of grave religious responsibility. A Quran-centered perspective reveals that the true source of such narrations is not religion itself, but rather traditional beliefs and the effort to impose religious significance upon the weekly cycle of human society.

The Deception of the Apparent, the Truth of the Hidden

Human beings are, by nature, inclined to judge by what they see. Faces, voices, postures, words — all of these trigger an evaluation mechanism in our minds that operates with remarkable speed. Yet this mechanism captures only the surface, not the truth. For a person's inner world — their true intentions, sincerity, and moral orientation — is never fully reflected in their face or speech. What is truly decisive lies in the invisible realm: the heart, the inner truth.

This is not merely a psychological problem. It is also a profound moral and spiritual one. Throughout history, people have been captivated by what appears beautiful, mistaking the harmful for the pleasant and rejecting genuine goodness because it

seemed unattractive. Getting to the root of this error carries great importance, both individually and collectively.

The Quran's Striking Warning: A Portrait of the Hypocrites

The Holy Quran laid bare this error most clearly, centuries ago. In describing the hypocrites, it states:

"And when you see them, their appearance pleases you. And if they speak, you listen to their words. They are like propped-up planks of wood. They think every cry is against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?" (Surah Al-Munafiqun, Verse 4)

With a single verse, this ayah points to one of humanity's greatest errors: assuming that what appears beautiful is good. What makes the verse particularly noteworthy is its emphasis that hypocrites are impressive not only in their outward appearance but also in their speech. The error, then, does not arise from visual perception alone — auditory and social influence also feed this illusion.

The phrase "propped-up planks of wood" is a remarkably powerful metaphor. A structure that appears imposing, upright, and solid from the outside, yet is completely hollow within. This simile captures the essence of the hypocrite perfectly. There is appearance, but no substance. There are words, but no sincerity. There is form, but no truth.

The Deep Chasm Between Appearance and Reality

In daily life, people typically rely on a few basic criteria when forming judgments: physical appearance, facial expression, manner of speaking, and social status. These elements lay the groundwork for the mind to construct a "good person" or "bad person" label within seconds. Modern psychology calls this the first impression bias. The human mind, seeking to conserve energy, makes rapid classifications rather than engaging in detailed analysis.

This mechanism may be functional for making quick decisions in moments of danger, but in social relationships and moral evaluations it leads to serious errors. The assumption that a fluent speaker must be telling the truth, the belief that a charismatic person must be sincere, or the notion that someone socially accepted must be in the right — all of these are perceptual errors.

Looking at history, the greatest deceptions were perpetrated by the most charismatic and impressive personalities. For the art of deception is built upon the manipulation of appearances.

The Dangerous Concealment of Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is not like open disbelief. On the contrary, its most dangerous quality lies precisely in its hiddenness. The hypocrite appears, from the outside, to be "one of us" — using the right words, inspiring trust, gaining social acceptance. Yet their inner world is devoid of sincerity.

This is the fundamental reason why the Quran issues such comprehensive warnings about hypocrites. For an open enemy reveals itself; its danger is visible and it is possible to take precautions against it. The hypocrite, by contrast, hides within trust itself — residing in the closest circles, behind the most innocent-seeming appearances.

This reality places a significant responsibility upon the individual: to look not merely at appearances, but at consistency. A person's worth lies not in how beautifully they speak, but in whether what they say aligns with what they do — in the harmony between their conduct in comfortable times and their bearing in moments of hardship.

The Critical Distinction Between Temperament and Faith

A significant portion of human behavior is directly related to biological and genetic foundations. Traits such as impatience, calmness, reactivity, and emotional intensity constitute a person's temperament — characteristics that are largely innate and beyond one's control. Yet here, a critically important distinction must be drawn:

Temperament is a tendency; faith is an orientation.

A person of harsh temperament is not necessarily bad. A person of gentle temperament is not necessarily good. When this distinction is overlooked, people fall into grave errors. Someone who appears stern yet is fundamentally sincere may be misjudged, while someone soft and gentle yet hypocritical can easily receive the stamp of "a good person."

The real question is this: To what does a person surrender their temperament? An impatient person, aware of this tendency, can work toward patience and rise. A gentle person may cloak that quality in the garb of pretension and fall. Temperament may be part of one's destiny — but worth emerges in how that temperament is directed.

The Laziness of Perception: The Danger of Unreflective Judgments

The human mind works quickly. While this speed offers practical advantages in daily life, it brings with it a dangerous complacency:

"They look good, therefore they are good."

"They speak well, therefore they speak truthfully."

"Society loves them, therefore they are trustworthy."

These are automatic conclusions produced without scrutiny. The Quran's approach, however, fundamentally rejects this laziness. According to the Quran, reaching the truth requires looking not at the outward but the inward — not at words but at consistency, not at image but at sincerity.

Three moments are especially revealing: behavior at the moment of self-interest, bearing in times of hardship, and conduct in the face of power. For it is at these

breaking points that the inner self is most exposed. Anyone can speak beautifully in comfortable times. True character becomes visible under pressure.

Faith: Invisible Yet the Most Real

Faith does not reside in outward appearance, in beautiful words, or in social image. It is an orientation that exists within a person's inner world — in the heart. This is why fluently invoking religious concepts, speaking with an impressive style, or cultivating a trustworthy image among others can never serve as a guarantee of sincerity.

History's greatest frauds were committed beneath the most outwardly pious veneers. The deepest sincerity, meanwhile, has most often remained hidden within the quietest, most humble, and most unassuming lives. This is not as paradoxical as it seems — it is the inevitable consequence of the very chasm between the outward and the inward.

The Path to Truth: A Deeper Gaze

Most people pass judgment by looking at the surface. This is easy, but misleading. Reaching the truth requires a far deeper and more patient kind of looking — one that involves: questioning hasty judgments, distinguishing appearance from reality, not confusing temperament with faith, and focusing not on words but on continuity.

Knowing a person requires looking not at who they are on their best days, but at how they stand on their worst. And most importantly: it is impossible to render a definitive verdict about anyone based solely on external data. For the truth of a person is invisible.

And perhaps the greatest error of all is believing — simply because you have looked at what is visible — that you know what cannot be seen.

Moving Beyond the Apparent

The apparent is deceptive. This is an inescapable human reality. But being aware of this reality is the first step toward guarding against error.

The Quran's warning about hypocrites is not merely a historical observation — it is a universal principle that retains its validity in every age and every society. To turn toward essence rather than appearance, toward attitude rather than words, toward truth rather than form — this is the foundation of both individual maturity and societal health.

To settle for the outward is easy. To seek the inward demands courage, patience, and profound discernment. But the road to truth passes only through that effort.

Suicide and the Quran's Perspective of Mercy: A Theological Evaluation

Suicide has been a subject of profound debate throughout human history, both socially and religiously. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the sanctity and importance of human life. Yet equally important as this prohibition is the question of definitive judgments made about the status of a person who has died by suicide

before God. Here, we examine how suicide is evaluated within the Quranic framework, the basis for its prohibition, and the relationship of God's attributes of mercy and forgiveness to this issue.

One of Islam's fundamental principles is that human life is a trust granted by God and subject only to His will. This principle is expressed in many forms throughout the Quran. In Surah An-Nisa 4:29, God Almighty says:

> "And do not kill yourselves. Indeed, God is merciful to you."

This verse explicitly prohibits not only killing others but also taking one's own life. What is striking is that God's attribute of mercy is mentioned immediately after the prohibition — the command comes not as a loveless decree, but as guidance from a Creator who protects and shows compassion toward humanity.

Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:32 also serves as a foundational reference:

> "Whoever kills a soul — unless as retaliation for a soul or for corruption in the land — it is as if he had killed all mankind."

The framing of killing as an assault on all of humanity reveals the ontological value placed on human life — not merely a legal rule, but an existential principle.

The Concept of Appointed Time and God's Absolute Will

According to Islamic belief, every person's appointed time of death has been determined and written by God. Surah Ali 'Imran 3:145 states:

> "And it is not for a soul to die except by permission of God at a decree determined."

This verse affirms that death is absolutely bound to God's will. Even an act that appears to be carried out by one's own volition — such as suicide — is ultimately understood within the framework of divine decree. A person's intention and action may be sinful, yet death itself occurs at the time God has written. This reminds us of the boundlessness of divine power and that human beings are not truly independent agents.

The Boundlessness of God's Forgiveness and Mercy

The fact that suicide is forbidden does not mean that the person who commits it is condemned to hellfire without question. The Quran takes a remarkably clear stance on this point. In Surah An-Nisa 4:116, God says:

> "Indeed, God does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills."

This ruling holds a central place in Islamic theology. Only shirk — associating partners with God — is identified as the sin that will certainly not be forgiven. All other sins, great or small, may be forgiven according to God's will. Suicide is undoubtedly a grave sin; however, within the principle the Quran has established, it is clear that it too may fall within the scope of divine forgiveness.

Furthermore, Surah Az-Zumar 39:53 not only affirms that sins can be forgiven but also identifies despair itself as a danger:

> "Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of God. Indeed, God forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

The address here is to people who have sinned gravely and are drowning in transgression. If God's mercy is emphasized even for such a dire condition — and if cutting off hope is presented as itself a form of wrongdoing — then declaring with certainty that a person who died by suicide "is surely doomed" directly contradicts the spirit of this verse.

The Theological Error of Absolute Judgment

Throughout history, some scholars have characterized suicide as an act that condemns a person definitively to hellfire, citing various hadith narrations in which a person who dies by suicide is said to repeat the act in hell until the Day of Judgment. However, when read through a Quran-centered lens, such absolute rulings are found to be incompatible with the Quran's overarching principles.

Nowhere does the Quran state that one who dies by suicide will certainly face punishment. On the contrary, when the verses cited above are considered together, the following picture emerges:

- Suicide is forbidden and a grave sin.

- Yet God's forgiveness may encompass all sins except shirk.

- Despairing of God is itself a sin.

- And death, ultimately, is subject to God's will.

When these four principles are considered together, it becomes clear that issuing a definitive theological verdict about a person who has died by suicide exceeds human authority. Judgment belongs to God alone; it is not the role of human beings either to guarantee forgiveness or to confirm punishment.

Evaluation from the Perspective of a Theology of Mercy

Islam's conception of God cannot be reduced to the image of a purely punishing deity. The Quran opens with the attributes of Rahman and Rahim; God's mercy precedes His wrath. Hadith literature also affirms that God's mercy surpasses His anger.

Within this framework, when one considers that a person who dies by suicide has in all likelihood made that decision in the depths of profound pain, hopelessness, spiritual collapse, or mental illness, a humane and theological sensitivity becomes unavoidable. Modern psychology has shown that suicide is in most cases not a free choice, but the result of psychological illness, chemical imbalances, and unbearable suffering. A decision made by a person whose mental health is severely compromised deserves to be evaluated on different moral grounds. In Islamic

jurisprudence as well, soundness of mind is accepted as a foundational criterion in the context of moral responsibility.

Suicide is clearly prohibited in the Quran — a grave sin, in light of the value the Quran attributes to human life. This is beyond dispute. But equally important as this prohibition is the truth that God's mercy and forgiveness are not without consequence. The Quran has designated only shirk as the cause of certain punishment, leaving all other sins to God's discretion.

To say of a person who has died by suicide, "they are certainly in hell," is to violate the limits the Quran has set and to pass judgment on God's behalf.

The perspective the Quran teaches us is this: Condemn the sin, but do not declare the person beyond God's mercy. Uphold the prohibition firmly, but do not draw limits around God's forgiveness. Protect life — for life is a trust from God. But leave the judgment of those who have lost it to God; for He knows best, and He alone renders the most just verdict.

Defining Allah Through Numbers: Cultural Superstition or the Quranic Concept of Tawhid?

When examining folk beliefs that have taken shape over centuries across the Islamic world, one notices that certain numbers are attributed to Allah or considered sacred. Figures such as 1, 3, 7, 40, and 99 have become virtually consecrated symbols in prayer rituals, everyday discourse, and even devotional practices. But is the true source of these beliefs the Quran, or do they draw from other cultural and mythological pools? The answer to this question is critically important for correctly understanding Islam's concept of tawhid (divine unity). For attempting to define Allah through numbers, though it may appear to be an innocent tradition on the surface, fundamentally carries the serious risk of likening Him to created things.

Allah is transcendent of time; He has no beginning or end. He is transcendent of space; He cannot be confined to any place and encompasses all things. He is transcendent of numerical measurement; concepts such as increase, decrease, division, and multiplication cannot be applied to Him.

Threefold Symbolism: Cultural Heritage or Religious Truth?

In Islamic culture, the number "three" holds a special place. Chief among its manifestations are the repetition of dhikr in threes or thirty-threes during tasbih, and the belief that threefold repetition in prayers and rituals lends them greater power. The popular belief that "saying something three times strengthens it" is widespread. But what is the source of this belief? Looking at history and cross-cultural mythology, threefold symbolism proves to be deeply rooted and pervasive throughout human history:

- In Greek mythology, the universe is divided in three between Zeus (sky), Poseidon (sea), and Hades (underworld).

- In Celtic belief, the goddess manifests in three forms: maiden, mother, and crone.

- In Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity is built on the triad of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- In many other ancient cultures, creation, death, and rebirth — or past, present, and future — have been venerated as threefold structures.

Islam's concept of tawhid, by its very nature, rejects such triadic constructions. In particular, the Quran's explicit critiques of Trinitarian belief serve as a theological warning against every conception of God built upon number. Allah's attributes and manifestations cannot be reduced to a fixed number; they are limitless and infinite. Not a single Quranic verse ties Allah's attributes to a numerical framework, nor does the Quran present a structure such as "three sacred qualities" or "seven divine powers." Such constructions are the product of mythological thinking, not of the Quran.

786 and Abjad: A Legacy of Esotericism, Not the Quran

Another practice common in the Islamic world — particularly in South Asia — is the belief that the number 786 represents the Basmala. According to this belief, the numerical value of "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" calculated through the abjad system equals 786, and this figure may be used in place of the Basmala itself. Yet this practice has no connection whatsoever to the Quran. The abjad system is an encryption method that assigns numerical values to Arabic letters. Its roots predate Islam and were shaped largely by external cultural influences:

- In the Jewish Kabbalistic tradition, assigning numerical meaning to letters (gematria) occupies a central place.

- Greek isopsephy associates the Greek alphabet with numerical values using the same logic.

- Indian mystical writing traditions also developed similar systems based on number-letter relationships.

It is visible in the historical record how these systems seeped into Islamic culture and how abjad gradually acquired religious significance. Yet to symbolize Allah's name — or the most exalted invocation addressed to Him — with a number is a prime example of reductionism that is entirely contrary to tawhid. Allah introduces Himself in the Quran through His names and attributes: Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim, Al-Aziz, Al-Hakim... These names were revealed to be used with their meanings, their profound content, and the qualities they set in motion in the mind. To replace them with a number is to annihilate their richness of meaning and to reduce Allah to a code.

The Dynamics of Superstition Formation: Culture, Tradition, and Syncretism

At this point it is necessary to ask: How did these beliefs become so widespread? The answer lies largely in cultural syncretism. Throughout history, Islam spread across vastly different geographies, and in each region it encountered pre-existing beliefs, rituals, and systems of thought. In the course of these encounters, the pure Islamic understanding at times became intertwined with ancient cultural practices.

The sanctification of numbers is a typical product of this process. People cast their newly adopted faith into the molds of old habits, and in doing so they generally took their traditions as their foundation rather than the Quran. Over time these practices acquired religious legitimacy, were transmitted from generation to generation, and became unquestionable. Yet the Quran repeatedly warns against precisely this kind of tendency toward social superstition. It criticizes blind adherence to ancestral tradition and encourages reason and inquiry.

Understanding Tawhid, Not Quantifying It

To understand the oneness of Allah, numbers are unnecessary. On the contrary, numbers can function as a veil that dulls that understanding. Tawhid means not likening Allah to any created thing, and holding Him beyond all limitation, measurement, and categorization. The word Ahad is the most concise expression of this understanding. It does not describe a numerical oneness but rather a unique and absolute singularity. It is not numbers themselves but the attribution of metaphysical meaning to numbers that is problematic.

The duty of Muslims is to carefully distinguish, within their cultural heritage, between what is genuinely grounded in the Quran and what is the product of mythological, esoteric, or historical influences. Any practice continued without making this distinction unwittingly pushes against the boundaries of tawhid.

Allah has introduced Himself not through numbers but through His attributes and acts. The path to understanding Him lies not in the symbolic power of numbers, but in turning toward the deep and rich language of the Quran.

The Semantics of Power in Light of Anfal 60: On Science, Ethics, and Independence

Throughout human history, power has been the fundamental factor determining the survival of societies. Yet the concept of power cannot be reduced to mere physical superiority — it is far too layered for that. The 60th verse of Surah Al-Anfal in the Holy Quran made this reality clear to believers fourteen centuries ago: "Prepare against them whatever forces you can…" A surface reading might interpret this verse as a purely military command. But a more careful and holistic perspective reveals that it carries a universal message that stands firm against time. At its core, that message says: one must be strong in every field, with the means available in every age.

The Meaning of Strength Changes; Its Necessity Does Not

In the seventh century when the verse was revealed, the phrase "horses kept ready" symbolized the most advanced warfare technology of the era. The horse was the emblem of both speed and power in that age. A society possessing well-bred horses was the most concrete demonstration of its readiness and preparedness. Yet this expression is not a frozen historical mold — it is a dynamic principle. The concept of "force" in this verse must be reassessed for every era. So what is "force" today? In the modern world, power manifests as scientific production capacity, technological infrastructure, economic independence, qualified human capital, and strategic planning ability. A society that cannot develop artificial intelligence algorithms is like

a warrior who cannot ride a horse. A state that cannot build a cybersecurity infrastructure resembles a fortress without walls. A nation that cannot produce its own medicine and food technology becomes dependent on others even for its most basic needs. Therefore, the call of Anfal 60 today clearly means: one must be strong in science, technology, reason, and organization.

The Price of Falling Behind: From Weakness to Dependency

A society's falling behind in science and technology is not merely a deficiency — it brings with it a systematic chain of dependency. Each link in this chain feeds the one before it, pushing the society into an increasingly fragile position. A society that falls behind in defense cannot ensure its own security and becomes subject to the political pressure of the countries that will provide that security. A society that becomes economically dependent falls into the position of consumer rather than producer, transferring its wealth to others' technology rather than its own output. Political pressure, in turn, opens decision-making mechanisms to external interference, and the will of the society is gradually eroded. This entire process stands in direct contradiction to "izzah" — one of Islam's fundamental values — meaning an honorable and independent existence. The tragedy here is this: falling behind usually stems not from a sudden collapse, but from choices neglected over long years. Postponing investment in science, allowing education to deteriorate in quality, the weakening of a research culture — none of these appear destructive in isolation. But when they accumulate, they trap societies in a dependency that will last for generations.

Deterrence: The True Purpose of Power

To understand Anfal 60 correctly, one must see that the verse also explicitly defines the purpose for which power is to be used. The phrase "to strike fear" that appears in the verse is frequently misinterpreted. It describes not aggression but deterrence — that is, power is prepared not to start wars, but to prevent them. This approach is in remarkable alignment with the concept of "balance of power" in modern international relations theory. Theorists of strategic balance have shown that the excessive weakening of one party emboldens aggressive actors and increases the risk of conflict. Conversely, a strong and prepared party forces a potential adversary to calculate, and that calculation often concludes with the cost of war being found prohibitive. Therefore, producing science and technology is a prerequisite for peace. A society that establishes its own defense industry, strengthens its cyber infrastructure, and invests in artificial intelligence and biotechnology simultaneously reduces the likelihood of conflict. Viewed from this perspective, scientific work ceases to be a luxury or an abstract academic pursuit and becomes the fundamental guarantee of societal security.

Science as Worship: Strategic Responsibility

In Islam, knowledge is valuable not only for worldly benefit but also for the purpose of understanding the universe God created and serving humanity through that understanding. A Muslim community's failure to produce science is both an individual and a collective neglect. Producing science, within this framework, is a

form of strategic worship — because this effort directly affects a society's independence, security, and contribution to humanity. A scientist conducting medical research brings both healing to patients and health independence to their country. An engineer developing defense technology simultaneously builds a deterrent force. An academic producing original work in artificial intelligence contributes to their society's digital sovereignty. This perspective also dissolves the false dichotomy framed as "science vs. religion." Anfal 60 defines science as a religious obligation — it does not merely recommend it; it commands it.

Power and Ethics: An Inseparable Pair

History shows that whenever power and ethics have been severed from one another, humanity has paid great costs. Power devoid of ethics produces tyranny. Ethics devoid of power is condemned to be trampled. The twentieth century dramatized the tension between these two extremes. When technological power was cut off from moral guidance, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place; chemical weapons annihilated communities; nuclear threats held all of humanity hostage. On the other hand, communities that held moral values yet remained powerless could not prevent themselves from being exploited, occupied, and erased. This tragic panorama — stretching from Palestine to Africa, from Asia to the Middle East — proved painfully that powerless goodness cannot protect the world. The balance that Anfal 60 points to gains its meaning precisely here: science and technology must be built under the guidance of ethics. This balance is the fundamental responsibility of both individuals and societies. Power must be produced — but that power must be directed by the values of justice, compassion, and fairness. Otherwise, power transforms from a means into an end, and instead of serving humanity, it threatens it.

Collective Responsibility: An Intergenerational Obligation

Another critical dimension of Anfal 60 is that this responsibility is social, not individual. The verse speaks not to an individual but to a community. In this framework, falling behind in science and technology is not merely a personal choice — it is a violation of an intergenerational obligation. A society that makes no investment in science today leaves a legacy of dependency for a generation that will face that reckoning thirty years from now. Children raised today within a low-quality education system will form a generation that is swept aside in international competition tomorrow. From this perspective, societal preparedness ceases to be a purely practical matter and becomes a moral responsibility toward future generations. The phrase "whatever forces you can" in the verse is also noteworthy. This expression does not ask the impossible of a society; it asks that the entirety of existing capacity be mobilized. That is, the true responsibility is not to produce excuses but to do one's best with what one has. Even with limited resources, investing in science, education, and technology is the concrete way of fulfilling the command of this verse.

Where Is True Strength Found?

The 60th verse of Surah Al-Anfal sets forth a principle spoken fourteen centuries ago that retains its full validity today. According to this principle, power is not the sum of

brute force — it is shaped by the possibilities of the age, serves the purpose of deterrence, and gains legitimacy when united with moral values. True strength is neither the sole production of weapons, nor economic growth alone, nor purely technological progress. True strength is born at the point where science, technology, and reason meet justice and ethics. When this meeting occurs, wars are prevented, societies preserve their independence, and humanity can exist in a safer world. Without scientific power, freedom cannot be protected. Without moral guidance, power cannot serve humanity. But when both are present together, neither aggression nor weakness remains — only a secure existence within justice.

Authentic Prophetic Medicine: A Fixed Prescription, or the Spirit of Seeking Healing?

Prophetic medicine (Tıbb-ı Nebevî) holds an important place in Islam, yet throughout history it has frequently been confined to a narrow and reductive framework. In many traditionalist circles, the concept has become synonymous with specific practices such as black seed and cupping (hijama), perceived as a fixed list of prescriptions derived from hadith narrations. However, this understanding conflicts both with Islam's holistic message and with the fundamental requirements of reason. So what does prophetic medicine truly mean? To answer this question correctly, it is impossible to separate the concept from its historical context, the question of the reliability of narrations, and the possibilities offered by modern medicine.

The Search for Healing: A Responsibility Embedded in Human Nature

According to the Quran, the universe was created with measure and order. Disease is part of this order — and so is healing. The human being is the only creature within this order endowed with reason, observation, and the capacity for inquiry. This endowment places upon humanity a great responsibility: to seek the most effective, most accurate, and most reliable solution to illness. From this perspective, the search for healing is not merely a matter of personal preference. On the contrary, it is a requirement of acting in harmony with the divine order (sunnah of Allah) embedded in creation. This divine order, referred to in Islam as sünnetullah, operates on cause-and-effect relationships — rewarding those who investigate and holding accountable those who neglect. True reliance on God (tawakkul) must also be understood in this context. Tawakkul is not abandoning causes, but rather turning toward the most correct cause available and then entrusting the outcome to God. When a believer directs themselves to the most effective treatment by employing all available knowledge and reason, they simultaneously act in harmony with the sünnetullah established by God.

The Misunderstanding of Prophetic Medicine: Three Core Problems

Disregarding Historical Context

Some of the treatment methods practiced during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad were limited by the knowledge and means available in that era. A treatment method employed in 7th-century Arabia may have been the best option of its time; however, this does not mean it constitutes a universal and immutable medical truth. Indeed, the principle the Prophet himself emphasized was not the

sanctification of time-bound practices, but rather entrusting matters to experts who know their field best.

The Question of the Reliability of Narrations

A significant portion of narrations concerning healing has been subject to serious criticism regarding their chains of transmission (isnad) and textual content (matn). Yet when a matter as vital as health is at stake, the accuracy and reliability of information is of unquestionable importance. Making health decisions on the basis of historically or culturally dubious narrations gives rise to serious risks both personally and socially. The Quran consistently foregrounds reason, evidence, and observation. Yet uncritically accepting narrations in the domain of health — without filtering them through the Quranic lens — contradicts this very Quranic principle.

Conflict with Scientific Realities

Claims such as the healing power of camel urine, or the assertion that black seed is "a cure for every illness," do not align with the experiment- and observation-based data of modern medicine. Science advances through repeatable experiments, statistical analyses, and independent verification. No claim should be exempt from this process. Moreover, one of Islam's most fundamental epistemological principles is to stand against blind imitation and to rely on evidence. To ignore this principle in the domain of medicine is both an intellectual and a moral inconsistency.

Modern Medicine: The Manifestation of Sünnetullah in Our Age

Modern medicine is built upon a rigorous system of observation, experimentation, statistics, and ethical oversight. This system is not accidental; it is the product of humanity's accumulated reason — and this reason is one of the greatest gifts God has bestowed upon humanity. Within this framework, vaccines, antibiotics, surgical interventions, and modern pharmaceuticals are part of the chain of causes created by God. Vaccines save millions of lives by building immunity before disease takes hold. Antibiotics treat bacterial infections by targeting the source. Surgical interventions resolve many conditions that were once considered fatal. To reject or belittle all of this is to reject the knowledge, reason, and capabilities that God has created. Such an attitude is incompatible with the ethic of responsibility that Islam teaches.

The Proper Place of Herbal Treatments

Just as it would be wrong to categorically dismiss herbal remedies, so too would it be wrong to elevate them without limit. Nature contains many plants with healing properties; indeed, many medications in modern pharmacology are derived from botanical sources. However, the fact that a plant may be beneficial in some cases does not mean it will benefit every illness, at every dose, for every person. Herbal products too must undergo clinical trials, have their side effects identified, and be used in a controlled manner. They may find a place as supportive treatments under scientific supervision, but they cannot replace treatments with established evidence.

Authentic Prophetic Medicine: An Attitude and a Way of Seeking

In light of all these considerations, authentic prophetic medicine is not a fixed list of prescriptions, an imitation of the practices of a particular era, or a blind attachment to narrations. Authentic prophetic medicine means seeking the most effective healing with the most reliable knowledge available — in every age and in every place. At the heart of this search lie the following principles:

- Prioritizing truth: Which method is more reliable, more effective, less harmful? Seeking honest answers to these questions.

- A consciousness of protecting human life: Hifz al-nafs — the preservation of life, one of Islam's fundamental values — makes it obligatory to pursue the most effective treatment.

- Not disabling reason: The Quran warns sternly against those who do not use their reason. This warning applies equally when it comes to medicine.

- Not treating science as an enemy of Islam: On the contrary, science is the systematic path to discovering the sünnetullah that God has woven into creation.

According to this understanding, receiving vaccinations, undergoing surgery, using antibiotics, or seeking any treatment offered by modern medicine are natural, legitimate, and responsible parts of the search for healing.

Reason, Science, and Faith: Not Conflict, but Completion

During the most brilliant periods of Islamic history, Muslim scholars were pioneers of humanity in medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy. Ibn Sina's al-Qanun was taught as a textbook in European medical faculties for centuries. These scholars saw no conflict between their religious belief and their scientific pursuits; on the contrary, they understood both as a mutually enriching whole. The same attitude holds true today. There is no necessary conflict between faith and science. Conflict arises only when one attempts to replace the other, or when one rejects the other. Properly understood, faith nourishes reason, inquiry, and science. Science, in turn, contributes to humanity's unraveling of the mysteries of creation and understanding of God's order. In this context, rejecting modern medicine is not merely a scientific error — it is also a religious inconsistency, for it amounts to refusing to employ the reason God has given, and refusing to turn to the causes He has created.

The Search for Healing Continues

To reconstruct the understanding of prophetic medicine correctly and anew is not to reject the past, but to keep the spirit of the past alive through the possibilities of the present. Just as seeking the most correct treatment in the time of the Prophet Muhammad carried value, the same value holds today. What has changed is only the instrument: the limited means of the past have been replaced today by laboratories, clinical trials, statistical analyses, and mechanisms of ethical oversight. This endeavor reflects both humanity's duty to be a responsible being in this world, and its obligation to comprehend the order God has created and to align with it. Healing is not chance — it is the fruit of research, reason, and sound method. And this very act of seeking is, at its core, one of the most tangible expressions of humanity's turning

toward its Creator.

The Expectation of Doomsday: A Recurring Human Psychology Throughout History and the Qur'an's Response

Human history is full of a deep and recurring paradox: every generation tends to see its own era as close to the final chapter of history. Every major crisis — from plague outbreaks to world wars, from economic collapses to natural disasters — has revived "end times" narratives. Yet this expectation has been repeated countless times over the centuries and has never come to pass. Six hundred years ago, people believed the apocalypse was near; six hundred years from now, the same thoughts will likely recur.

THE MIND'S CENTRALITY FALLACY

The human mind naturally places the present moment at the center of everything. Every generation tends to perceive its own era as the most critical, most important — perhaps the final — period in history. This psychological tendency rests on several core reasons.

The limits of personal experience: People can only directly experience events they witness within their own lifetimes. Historical knowledge comes from books and narratives, but the crisis being lived is a unique reality for the person experiencing it. This is why the current crisis appears larger and more significant than its historical counterparts.

Emotional intensity: Personally lived pain, fear, and uncertainty are far more powerful than historical knowledge. For someone living through the plague epidemic of the 14th century, that period truly felt like the end of the world — even though similar or worse epidemics had occurred before.

Loss of control: During major crises, people lose their sense of control. Faced with famines, wars, earthquakes, and pandemics, helplessness sets in. In such moments, the mind is inclined to interpret events not as "an ordinary historical process" but as "the ultimate end." Suffering thereby acquires meaning: "If there is this much evil, the world must already be ending."

At the root of this fallacy lies the human tendency to position one's own existence as the center of the universe. Yet history has proven, time and again, that no era has ever truly been "the final era."

THE UNIVERSALITY AND MEANINGLESSNESS OF DOOMSDAY SIGNS

The signs traditionally put forward as evidence that the apocalypse is near carry a striking universality: the corruption of morals, the increase of wars, the multiplication of natural disasters, the spread of injustice, the dominance of social chaos, the loss of trust, children rebelling against their parents. The common feature of these signs is that they have recurred continuously throughout human history. Every era has adapted this list to its own circumstances and declared, "Look — these things are happening now."

Yet the historical reality is this: these phenomena existed a thousand years ago, they exist today, and they will exist a thousand years from now. Moral corruption, for instance, is always a relative concept. Every older generation tends to find the young more immoral than before. From the ancient Greek philosophers to the present, texts lamenting "the new generation has gone astray" are easy to find. Wars, famines, and natural disasters existed in every era of history. To perceive them as "unprecedented" stems from a lack of historical perspective.

If a phenomenon is valid in every era and every place, what does it mean cognitively to treat that phenomenon as an indicator of the apocalypse? It is a simple question of logic: if X is always and everywhere observable, the existence of X cannot predict Y (the apocalypse). A sign with zero predictive power ceases to be a sign at all.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES: APOCALYPSES THAT NEVER CAME

Looking at history, it becomes clear in which periods apocalyptic expectation intensified.

In Christian Europe, many believed the world would end a thousand years after the birth of Jesus. This expectation led to social panic and, in some regions, the halting of economic activity. The year 1000 passed — and nothing happened.

In the 14th century, the Black Death wiped out a third of Europe's population. People interpreted it as the beginning of the apocalypse. Streets were filled with corpses; social order had collapsed. But the world did not end — societies rebuilt themselves.

In Christian mysticism, "666" is seen as the number of the devil. The year 1666 therefore generated great fear. The Great Fire of London broke out that year and seemed to confirm expectations. Yet the apocalypse did not come. The slaughter of the First World War led many to believe the end of the world had arrived. Y2K generated both religious and technological doomsday scenarios — none materialized. The Maya calendar of 2012 inspired films and books; the date came and went.

All of these examples demonstrate that apocalyptic expectation is a recurring pattern. Every era sees its own crisis as unique — but history tells a different story. Said Nursi's Hijri 1545 / Gregorian 2120 and Edip Yüksel's 2280 predictions will, God willing, take their place on this long list.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Several fundamental reasons explain why apocalyptic expectation is so widespread and so persistent.

The projection of the fear of death: When individual fear of death is transformed into a collective expectation of death (the apocalypse), it becomes easier to manage subconsciously. The thought "I am not dying — the world is ending" is less painful than accepting personal mortality.

The search for meaning: In the face of great suffering, loss, and crisis, the human mind seeks meaning. "Why so much evil?" — the answer "because the end is near"

can be comforting. Suffering thereby ceases to appear random and becomes attached to a purpose.

The perception of control: Believing the apocalypse is near can, paradoxically, provide a sense of control. The person at least feels they "know what is happening." Uncertainty diminishes; the future shortens and sharpens.

Nostalgia and resistance to change: Every generation idealizes the past. New technologies, shifting values, and changing social norms create discomfort. The mind that interprets this change as "decay" can easily arrive at the conclusion: "The world is ending."

Social approval and group identity: Groups formed around apocalyptic expectation provide a powerful sense of belonging. The thought "We know the truth; others do not" reinforces identity and strengthens group solidarity.

THE EXPLOITATION BY FALSE SAVIORS

Throughout history, in times of crisis, many individuals have emerged to proclaim themselves the Mahdi, the Messiah, a savior, or a prophet. These figures have exploited people's fear and uncertainty for material and spiritual gain. The common features of such movements are striking: proclaiming that the apocalypse is imminent; promising salvation only to those who believe in them; demanding material sacrifice from followers; directing people away from social life into isolation; and expecting unconditional obedience to the leader figure. The outcomes stand as bitter warnings in the pages of history: the Jonestown massacre, the Waco siege, the Heaven's Gate mass suicide. These tragic examples lay bare, in all their starkness, how apocalyptic rhetoric can be turned into a weapon.

ESCAPE FROM SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A widespread belief that the apocalypse is near can lay the groundwork for society's withdrawal from long-term responsibilities.

In terms of education and science, the thought "the world is ending anyway" can render research and investment in the future meaningless. Yet even in traditional belief, the hadith "If the Hour is coming and you have a seedling in your hand, plant it" emphasizes that responsibility can never be suspended under any circumstances.

Regarding the environment and future generations: if the world is ending soon, long-term thinking — environmental protection, sustainable development, preserving resources for future generations — becomes trivial.

In the realm of social reform and justice: instead of struggling against injustice and oppression, a culture of passive waiting develops. The thought "God will hold them accountable soon anyway" can blunt the effort to establish earthly justice.

Yet the Qur'anic approach is very different. To cultivate the world, to establish justice, to advance knowledge, to improve life — these are humanity's core responsibilities. One of the wisdoms behind keeping the timing of the Hour hidden is precisely this:

so that humanity does not escape these responsibilities.

THE QUR'AN'S PERSPECTIVE

The Qur'an takes an unambiguous stance on the timing of the Hour: this knowledge belongs to God alone and has not been disclosed to human beings.

"They ask you about the Hour — when will it anchor? Say: Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He can reveal it at its time. It weighs heavily upon the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except suddenly. They ask you as though you are well acquainted with it. Say: Its knowledge is only with God, but most people do not know." (Al-A'raf, 187)

This verse carries several critical messages. First, even the Prophet Muhammad did not know the timing of the Hour — this knowledge belongs to God alone. Second, the Hour will come at an unexpected moment; its date cannot be fixed or calculated. Third, most people do not understand this reality and keep asking "when?" — whereas the real question should be "how should one live?"

To attempt to determine the timing of the Hour is to claim knowledge that God has kept hidden. Therefore, those who name specific dates are — knowingly or not — attributing to themselves knowledge that belongs exclusively to God.

THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEM WITH DOOMSDAY SIGN NARRATIONS

The narrations concerning "signs of the Hour" found in hadith literature may appear at first glance to carry the character of moral warnings, but upon deeper examination they contain serious problems.

The Narration: "When Trust Is Given to Those Unworthy of It"

In a narration attributed to Abu Hurairah, when a Bedouin asks about the Hour, the Prophet responds: "When trust is given to those unworthy of it, await the Hour" (Bukhari, Knowledge, 2).

The phenomenon of "trust being given to those unworthy of it" existed in the time of Pharaoh, in Rome, in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, and in modern nation-states. This transforms the narration into a statement that appears true in every era but genuinely confirms none. A statement with zero predictive power produces rhetoric, not theological knowledge. Furthermore, the narrative form of the narration is noteworthy — phrases like "Did he hear, or did he not?", "Did he dislike the question?", "Then he turned and called out" belong to the language of storytelling and homily, not the language of revelation.

The Narration: "Earthquakes, Murders, and the Shortening of Time"

Another narration transmitted via Abu Hurairah links the Hour to the disappearance of knowledge, the multiplication of earthquakes, the shortening of time, the increase of strife and murders, and the proliferation of wealth (Bukhari, Istisqa, 27).

This approach directly contains the following assumption: the Hour is an event that

will occur when certain social and physical indicators surpass a certain threshold. This assumption fundamentally contradicts the Qur'an's teaching on the Hour.

Regarding earthquakes, the historical reality is clear. Earthquakes such as Antioch (526 CE), Lisbon (1755), and Tangshan (1976) caused far greater loss of life than contemporary ones. The claim that "earthquakes have multiplied" provides no objective basis for comparison, since it does not specify the time frame, the magnitude scale, or the geography being assessed.

The phrase "the shortening of time" is even more philosophically problematic. Time itself does not change; what changes is the human perception of time. In the modern world, the acceleration of pace, the multiplication of stimuli, and the fragmentation of attention represent a transformation not of time but of consciousness. To present a perceptual state as an ontological reality is a categorical error.

The Structural Conflict with the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the Hour is part of the unseen (ghayb); it comes suddenly, is not tied to conditions, and cannot be reduced to statistical processes. The Qur'an does not provide humanity with a causal timeline of the form "when such-and-such occurs, the Hour is near." Therefore, presenting perennial phenomena of human history — such as the squandering of trust, the increase of earthquakes, or the proliferation of wealth — as harbingers of the Hour violates the Qur'an's fundamental teaching on the Hour. The Prophet in the Qur'an speaks plainly, delivers his message directly, and is not presented through vague theatrical staging. These narrations, by contrast, transform the Prophet from a bearer of revelation into an "eschatological commentator" — a transformation that is un-Qur'anic.

Why Were These Narrations Produced?

In periods of social disintegration, it is observable that rather than direct political criticism of the incompetence of rulers, the increase of violence, and economic injustice, the discourse of "the Hour is approaching" was produced instead. This is an indirect tool of moral pressure. Statements like "trust has been given to those unworthy of it" do not invite questioning of the existing order — they present the situation as fate and render people passive. The result is that these narrations generate acceptance rather than resistance, and construct fear rather than responsibility.

THE RELATIVITY OF TIME AND THE DIVINE PERSPECTIVE

Modern physics has demonstrated that time is not absolute. Einstein's theory of relativity showed that time varies according to speed and gravity. The Qur'an also points to the relativity of time:

"And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count." (Al-Hajj, 47)

From the divine perspective, past, present, and future all exist simultaneously. What for us is a future yet to come already exists within God's knowledge. For this reason,

the question "when is the Hour?" is meaningful from a human standpoint but incomplete from a divine one. Time is a created entity; the Creator transcends time. The Hour, in God's knowledge, has already occurred — what remains unrealized exists only from our perspective.

THE INDIVIDUAL HOUR: DEATH

Perhaps the most critical point is this: for every human being, the true Hour is their own death. When a person dies, their relationship with the world is severed and time ends for them. Even if the world continues for thousands of years, it no longer matters to the one who has died. The accounting they must face has begun.

"For every community there is a term. When their term comes, they cannot delay it by an hour, nor advance it." (Al-A'raf, 34)

From this perspective, the question far more important than "when will the Hour come?" is: What will I encounter when I die? Death can come at any moment — for the young and the old, the wealthy and the poor, the healthy and the sick. The person's true responsibility is to be prepared for death and to live every moment with awareness.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MEANINGFUL LIVING

One of the deepest wisdoms in keeping the timing of the Hour hidden is to keep humanity in a constant state of moral responsibility. If the date of the Hour were known, people might live irresponsibly until that date; panic would grow as it approached; long-term efforts to build and improve the world would become meaningless.

The balance Islam proposes is this: Work for the world as though you will live forever; prepare for the hereafter as though you will die tomorrow. This balance between two extremes offers a sound philosophy of life. Cultivate the world, advance knowledge, improve society — but do not stray from ethics, because you may be called to account at any moment.

Planting a seedling when the Hour is upon you should be the essence of Islam's outlook on life, responsibility, and hope.

Throughout human history, every generation has seen its own era as the beginning of the end. Yet history consistently shows that these expectations have never materialized. Apocalyptic expectation is a recurring pattern of human psychology — it intensifies during crises, deepens when control is lost, and spreads as uncertainty grows.

The narrations concerning signs of the Hour contain timeless generalizations, are adaptable to every era, offer no criteria for measurement or verification, and conflict with the Qur'an's emphasis on the unseen and on suddenness. For these reasons, they are human constructs produced after the fact rather than transmitters of divine knowledge. Within a Qur'an-centered faith and consciousness, these narrations are not binding texts — they are materials to be passed through a critical filter.

The Qur'an's message is clear: The timing of the Hour is a secret that no one but God can know. The Hour will come suddenly. Those who claim to know it with certainty are either in error or attributing to themselves knowledge that belongs to God alone.

The real issue is not when the Hour will come — but how one lives. For every human being, the Hour is their own death, and death can come at any moment. The truly wise person does not attempt to predict the time; they live every moment with a consciousness of responsibility — cultivating the world, upholding justice, seeking knowledge, doing good, and remaining accountable at every instant.

The Qur'an is sufficient. The unseen belongs to God. Responsibility belongs to humanity.

Mythological Sanctity: A Sociological and Historical Critique of the Concepts of Wali, Ghawth, and Qutb

One of the most deeply rooted tendencies of the human mind is its need for an intermediary to make the incomprehensible meaningful. Throughout history, societies have produced various figures to meet this need: the shaman, the priest, the saint, the wali, the mujtahid, the mujaddid, the qutb, the ghawth. Although these figures often emerged as products of sincere belief or social benevolence, the stories woven around them over time transformed them into mythological heroes. In the Islamic world, this process has been especially pronounced around concepts such as "wali," "ghawth," "qutb," "mujtahid," and "mujaddid" — terms generated by the Sufi tradition. The titles in question, and the miracles attributed to them, are subsequently constructed social fabrications. When a person's real or exaggerated qualities combine with the desire for communal belonging, the erasure of contemporary witnesses, and the perpetual reproduction of narratives across generations, an unquestionable perception of "sanctity" emerges. Moreover, this mechanism has become operable far more rapidly and systematically in the digital age.

Conceptual Framework: Ghawth, Qutb, Fardiyya — Quranic or Human?

When the Quran — Islam's foundational source — is examined, it becomes evident that hierarchical titles such as "ghawth," "qutb," or "mujaddid" have no basis whatsoever in that source. These concepts did not take shape in early Islam; rather, they began forming in Sufi literature from the third and fourth centuries of the Hijri calendar onward, eventually evolving into a systematic hierarchy of sainthood. According to this hierarchy constructed by the Sufi tradition, the universe at any given moment contains a fixed number of "qutbs," "abdals," "awtad," and "nujaba," at the apex of whom stands the "ghawth" or "qutb al-aqtab." The station of fardiyya, meanwhile, appears in certain late Sufi texts as a term used — out of ignorance, given the underdeveloped state of science — for individuals of high innate intelligence, defined as the highest spiritual rank at which a person perceives their own inner truth. Yet none of these definitions appear in any verse of the Quran. Verse 40 of Surah Yusuf offers a strikingly precise criterion on this point: "Those you serve besides Him are nothing but names you and your forefathers have invented — Allah has sent down no authority for them." Beyond a religious argument, the verse carries the force of an

epistemological warning: if the categories people mentally sanctify have not passed through the approval of revelation, they amount to nothing more than a human act of naming. Ghawth, qutb, and fardiyya, when evaluated within this framework, are not the names of a divine classification but of social categories produced by the human intellect and the need for communal belonging.

The Sociology of Miracle Production: Time, the Witness Gap, and Narrative

To understand how a narrative of sanctity forms around a person, the concept of the "witness gap" holds key importance. Once roughly one generation — approximately twenty-five to thirty years — has passed, the living witnesses to particular events have either died or grown very old. The transmitted knowledge is no longer firsthand; it is a second-, third-, or even fourth-hand account. In this process, the tendency of narratives to be exaggerated, reinterpreted, and idealized inevitably increases. The process sociologist Max Weber described as the "routinization of charisma" comes into play precisely at this point. While alive, a charismatic leader or thinker directly influences the community around them; after death, this influence is converted into an institutional structure or a sacred narrative. For the community to survive, the leader must not be rendered ordinary; miracles, knowledge of the unseen, and extraordinary states are therefore constructed or embellished.

Historical examples illustrate this dynamic concretely. Examining the lives of figures such as Ibn Arabi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, or Haji Bektash Veli, one finds that the layers of miraculous stories accumulated around them took shape not during their lifetimes but through the contributions of subsequent generations. The legendary strata surrounding them were produced after the fact. Analytical competence and accurate predictions also play a critical role in this process. When a person during their lifetime analyzes and interprets events with precision, that ability can over time be reframed as "knowledge of the unseen." Statistically speaking, some predictions made by any intelligent and observant individual will prove correct; yet the will toward communal identity foregrounds these successes while disregarding the errors. Selective memory and confirmation bias are the psychological engines of miracle production.

Accelerated Sanctity Production in the Digital Age

Whereas in traditional periods the maturation of a sanctity narrative took centuries, the digital age has dramatically compressed this process. The opportunities afforded by social media, e-book platforms, and search engine algorithms are sufficient for a fabricated sanctity narrative to develop a tangible community base within fifteen to twenty years. It is possible to analyze this process step by step.

In the first stage, content and reputation are constructed: texts of a religious, philosophical, or mystical nature are produced and uploaded to multiple platforms. Academic citation mechanisms are activated; by encouraging researchers to download and cite these texts, an intellectual legitimacy is conferred upon them. In the second stage, a miracle narrative is produced: through various pseudonyms and accounts, extraordinary attributes and miracles concerning the original person begin to circulate. Over time, through cross-references and repetition, these stories acquire

the appearance of "verified knowledge." In the third stage, the process of recruiting a new generation is completed: twenty-five to thirty years later, the new generation that has grown up with these stories encounters that person not as someone examined and found wanting, nor as an obscure figure, but as a historical authority. No living witness to the origin of the story remains.

The difference between this process and traditional mythology production is, at its core, merely one of speed. The structural mechanisms — the witness gap, the acquisition of legitimacy through repetition, selective memory — remain the same. Digital technology has not eliminated these mechanisms; on the contrary, it has amplified and accelerated them.

The Need for Intermediaries and the Quran's Structure of Individual Address

When the structure of the Quran — Islam's sufficient source — is examined, a striking feature becomes apparent: the Quran addresses the individual directly. Expressions such as "Will you not reason?" and "Will you not reflect?" demonstrate that revelation speaks to the individual intellect and conscience. The Quran does not imply that an intermediary is needed in the production of meaning; on the contrary, it commands direct reading, understanding, and reasoning.

Yet this structure contains a demand that runs counter to human psychology. When religious responsibility is individualized, it becomes anxiety-inducing; whereas submission to an authority disperses this anxiety and shares or transfers responsibility. Attaching oneself to a shaykh, a wali, or a community leader both satisfies the individual's need to belong to a group and offers the opportunity to delegate the responsibility of religious interpretation to another. This psychological dynamic explains why the Sufi tradition has held such powerful appeal. The problem arises at the point where one interposes between God and the servant, where the individual interpretation of revelation is obstructed, and where obedience to an intermediary is presented as an obligation akin to a religious duty. Looking at history, it is clear that many tariqa structures deviated from the spirit of the Quran precisely at this point: obedience rather than questioning, submission rather than reasoning became the cardinal virtue — and this brought with it a collective paralysis of the intellect.

Reasoning, Questioning, Thinking: A Quranic Obligation

The Quran does not merely recommend reason and questioning; it frames them as an obligation. Expressions such as "Will you not reason?" (Al-Baqara 44), "Will you not reflect?" (Al-An'am 50), and "Most of them do not reason" (Al-Ma'ida 103) frame the act of thinking as an inseparable part of faith. Viewed from this perspective, blind attachment to the discourse of a particular individual is not merely a sociological problem; it is also an attitude the Quran explicitly opposes. To abandon questioning on the grounds that "we found our forefathers doing this" is precisely the posture of imitation (taqlid al-abad) that the Quran criticizes in numerous verses.

The crux of the matter is this: no matter how wise, no matter how virtuous a person may be, their discourse cannot take the place of the Quran. To place any individual's

views ahead of revelation — regardless of that individual's intent — is an epistemological deviation. History offers many examples of this: a thinker's original ideas have become dogmatized over time, until questioning them is regarded as disrespect toward that thinker, or even irreligion.

The Universal Logic of Myth Production and Individual Responsibility

The sanctity stories woven around titles such as wali, ghawth, and qutb are, at their core, products of a universal myth-production mechanism. This mechanism consists of the following components: a real or exaggerated founding figure, the desire for communal belonging, the witness gap, selective memory, and the acquisition of legitimacy through repetition. The digital age has not dismantled this mechanism; it has merely accelerated it.

The Quran's call directed at the individual intellect and conscience is the most robust epistemological safeguard against this dynamic. To question, to reflect, to reason — to be the direct addressee of revelation rather than surrendering to an intermediary. No human being — however wise, however virtuous, however charismatic — can interpose between another human being and God; and if such interposition is taking place, its legitimacy must always be questioned.

Historical memory is selective, stories erode and transform, witnesses fade. What remains are only the names that people have named and the stories they have produced. Verse 40 of Surah Yusuf declared this truth centuries ago: naming without evidence, however widespread it may become, is not truth itself.

The Prohibition of Inquiry: Why Does a System Fear the Light?

Why Is Asking Questions Dangerous?

Throughout history, the most dangerous sentence has come not from the barrel of a gun, but from the mouth of an authority: "Don't ask that." Questioning is the most fundamental and honorable act of the human mind. When a child asks "why?", they are trying to crack open the doors of the universe. But some systems slam that door shut, bolt it, and bury the key under a label that reads "sin."

How Is a Religion Manufactured? A Hypothetical but Realistic Scenario

A. Gathering the Raw Material

Imagine a text producer. This person wants to construct a religion. They have science books at hand: ecology, geology, medicine, astronomy. They select real facts from these books. They note soil erosion cycles, the biological effects of climate change, the spread patterns of epidemic diseases. These are already accurate pieces of information. But in the next step, this knowledge is repackaged in carefully chosen metaphorical and authoritative language. Verses are fabricated. Into them are embedded both this scientific data and the name, mission, and promises of a fictional prophet.

B. Choosing the Platform and Building Fake Authority

The produced text is uploaded not to an ordinary forum, but to an academic platform. This choice is not coincidental — it is calculated. The human mind automatically equates "academic" with "verified." The platform's credibility rubs off onto the content. This is the most dangerous form of information pollution: pouring false information into a trustworthy container.

C. The Vulnerable Mind Enters the Picture

Some time later, someone finds that text. This individual, who exhibits traits of schizotypal personality disorder or delusional disorder, has a neurological tendency to draw extraordinary connections between random events. The text appears to them as "revelation" — because it answers everything. Without contradiction. It contains scientific data. And it feels as though it places them and their unique life experience at the center. This person takes ownership of the text. And the act of ownership amplifies the text further, because their intense belief fills the rational gaps with emotional certainty. Followers compensate for the absence of evidence with the intensity of the leader's conviction.

D. Intergenerational Transmission and the Hardening of the System

This individual has children. Children come into the world with minds not yet developed enough to question the system they are born into. The "timeless message" presented to them becomes the foundation of their perception of reality. Years later, when information drawn from ecology or geology books comes to pass, the community cries, "Behold, a miracle!" Yet that "miracle" is nothing more than the silent, impartial workings of already-existing science.

Internal Consistency Is Not Proof of Truth

Perhaps this is the most critical point of the entire discussion. The fact that a system is internally consistent does not prove that system is correct. This is one of the foundational teachings of the philosophy of logic. A mathematically flawless lie may contain no logical contradictions — and yet it remains a lie. In classical logic, this is called a "consistent but false system." Euclidean geometry is perfect within its own axioms, but fails in curved space. Consistency, in other words, is necessary for truth but not sufficient.

A religious text may possess:

- An internally non-contradictory structure

- Sections that appear to "foresee" scientific facts through metaphorical language

- Messages claiming to transform humanity

- Passages calling on the reader to question

And it may still be entirely fabricated.

So what is the real test? Independent verifiability. Can the claims the text puts forward be tested against external, independent sources? Is it only internally

consistent, or does it also align with the outside world? Every interpretation of "miracles" made without asking this question diminishes the importance of the source of knowledge. Scientific truths already existed; presenting them as "revelation" is nothing more than claiming ownership of pre-existing knowledge.

Psychological Mechanisms: Why Is Belief So Powerful?

Human psychology offers extraordinarily fertile ground for belief systems. When the following three core drives converge, people can become powerfully attached even to things that are not real:

1. The Search for Meaning: The human mind abhors uncertainty. If a text or system answers every question and presents a sense of wholeness, the questioning mechanism may lower its defenses, declaring "there is no error here."

2. The Need for Belonging: Belonging to a community is a biological need. When a belief system fulfills this need, the individual's critical thinking begins to serve the drive to protect the system. Contradictions go unnoticed; and even when noticed, they are rationalized away with "there must be wisdom in this."

3. Charismatic Discourse: Language constructs reality. An authoritative, poetic, metaphorical, and emotionally charged language creates a powerful effect independent of the content's accuracy. A charismatic leader or text persuades not through evidence, but through tone. These three drives operate with particular force in an individual with schizotypal tendencies, because such individuals have a neurological inclination to draw meaningful connections between events. They may read an ordinary coincidence as a "sign," or a fragment of text as a "revelation." And this reading spreads to those around them. A critical distinction must be made here: the goal is not to blame these individuals, but to understand the psychological mechanism. The system exploits these vulnerabilities; the individual, more often than not, acts in good faith.

The Human Controls the Text; The Claim of Revelation Controls the Person

You read a science book. You mark the parts you find wrong. You argue with the author. You control the text — the text does not control you. But a text that claims to be revelation reverses this relationship. Now, to question the text means to question God. And in most traditional systems, this is the gravest of sins.

So what might a genuine revelation be expected to do?

- Transcend the knowledge boundaries of its era in a natural, unstrained way

- Avoid internal contradiction

- But most importantly: expose the human being — lay bare the ego, reveal hypocrisy, unsettle

- Not demand blind faith, but continually call for thinking

The phrases repeated throughout the Quran — "Do you not use your reason?", "Do you

not reflect?" — are profoundly meaningful when read from this perspective. Genuine revelation does not demand blind obedience. But human-made systems treat questioning as a threat and place loyalty above all.

An Epistemological Look at the History of Hadith and Legal Schools

This hypothetical scenario bears a striking parallel to processes that have actually occurred in history. Recognizing this parallel is important not as an attack on any religion, but as an epistemological lesson.

A. Filling the Gap: The Emergence of Hadith

After the Prophet Muhammad's death, the Islamic community grew rapidly and spread across different geographies: Persia, Byzantium, Egypt. But something was missing. Local traditions were absent from the hadith corpus. This led to the fabrication of hadith to incorporate local customs into the religion.

Two phenomena emerged: first, hadith — retrospective answers to the question "what would he have done if he had lived?"; and second, legal schools (madhabs) — jurisprudential frameworks producing solutions to local problems. Originally mere "opinions" or "narrations," these elements gradually hardened as the system demanded internal consistency.

B. The Shield of Isnad: The Historical Counterpart of the Academic Platform Effect

Hadith were fabricated years after the Prophet Muhammad's death and gradually committed to writing. In the interim, political rivalries, local cultures, and the desire to "speak in the name of the Prophet" all entered the picture. As a solution, the isnad chain was developed: "X heard from Y, who heard from Z." This chain functioned just as an academic platform confers false authority on content. Rather than testing the content of a statement against the Quran, people began looking at the list of those who transmitted it. But no matter how long and prestigious an isnad chain may be, it cannot make false information true. Reliability in form does not guarantee accuracy of content.

C. The Normalization of Contradiction: The Paradox of "Disagreement Is a Mercy"

The legal schools, in constructing their jurisprudential systems, used hadith that contradicted one another. The Shafi'i school declared something permissible; the Hanafi school declared it forbidden. Logically, something cannot be both right and wrong — this is a universal principle. But rather than confronting this contradiction, a meta-principle was invented: "The disagreement of the community is a mercy." Thus a logical impossibility was presented as divine generosity. Contradiction was removed from being a flaw in the system; it was reframed as the system's richness. This is a classic mechanism for protecting the system by disabling the intellect.

D. The Closing of the Gate of Ijtihad: The Freezing of the System

From the 10th century onward, the understanding that "the gate of ijtihad is closed" began to prevail. The opinions of the founding imams became beyond dispute. The

individual was required to defer not to the Quran or their own reason, but to the imam's interpretation. This was precisely the transition to the phase of "the system children are born into." Questioning was equated with "sedition" (fitna) or apostasy. The legal school became religion itself. And this transformation was reinforced by the support of the Umayyad and Abbasid states; religion was transformed from a call to liberation into a component of a system of obedience.

The Prohibition of Inquiry: A Confession of the System's Fragility

Here we arrive at an extremely important logical conclusion. Why does a system fear being questioned? Because a lie is inherently fragile and cannot withstand light. Truth emerges from questioning stronger. A lie dissolves under questioning. This is why the prohibition of inquiry is, in fact, the system's most honest moment: the moment it silently confesses the fragility it carries within.

The stance that "questioning the legal school is forbidden" is nothing other than saying "don't look too closely at this structure, because if you do, you might see the cracks." The labeling of questioning as "the devil" or "sedition" is that artificial system's survival instinct. Against this, every system that genuinely claims to hold the truth should be able to say — and must say: "Question. Investigate. Compare against independent sources. If you find a contradiction, bring it to me." Truth does not fear. Only lies fear.

The Chasm Between the Religion One Is Born Into and the Religion One Chooses

Children do not possess the capacity to question. The system they are born into becomes their map of reality. This holds true everywhere in the world and across every belief system. A child born into a Buddhist family becomes Buddhist; a child born into a Christian family becomes Christian; a child born into a Muslim family becomes Muslim. This is a statistically incontestable fact. What does this mean? It does not mean that the religion one is born into is right or wrong. But it shows that a belief system is the product of geographical and familial accident, not of the individual's free choice. The mind that recognizes this distinction can go one step further: "If I had chosen this system freely, by what criteria would I have chosen it?" This question is the starting point of genuine seeking.

Distinguishing Characteristics of a Genuine Belief System vs. a Human-Made System

| Criterion | Genuine Belief / Revelation | Human-Made System |

|---|---|---|

| Approach to questioning | Encourages it | Forbids or punishes it |

| Confronting contradiction | Accepts and explains | Ignores or rationalizes |

| Transforming the human | Liberates | Enslaves |

| Independent verification | Possible | Impossible or forbidden |

| The role of the leader figure | Exposes, unsettles | Comforts, creates dependency |

| Response to criticism | Grows stronger through inquiry | Defends itself through attack |

This table draws a clear dividing line. If a text that says "question yourself" does not encourage you to look at it from the outside, it is in fact trying to trap you within itself. A genuine belief system transforms the human being while simultaneously liberating them. Human-made systems transform while enslaving.

Truth Withstands the Light

The unquestioning mind does not merely join a religion. It becomes a component of a fiction constructed by someone else. This is not a religious judgment — it is an epistemological truth. The source of knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself. False information published on an academic platform does not lose its falseness; it merely appears credible. A false hadith with a prestigious isnad chain does not lose its falseness; it merely appears authoritative.

What are the criteria of truth?

1. Independent verifiability: Can the claim be tested against external sources?

2. Contradiction analysis: Is the system consistent within itself and with the external world?

3. Freedom of inquiry: Is criticism accepted from within the system?

4. The quality of transformation: Does the system liberate the human being, or enslave them?

These criteria apply equally to religion, to science, and to philosophy. No name, no authority, no tradition can substitute for these criteria.

"Do you not use your reason?" is one of the most powerful questions reaching us from across the centuries. And every system that forbids the asking of this question has already confessed just how apt that question truly is.

Truth does not fear. Because truth is not destroyed by light — it is made visible by it.

Evidence-Based Faith: Inquiry, Authority, and Truth in Islam

The Core Call of the Quran: Using Reason and Demanding Evidence

At the heart of Islamic thought lies one of its most fundamental principles: truth is found not through passive acceptance, but through active pursuit. This principle goes far beyond being an abstract methodology — it presents itself directly as a responsibility of faith and a moral obligation. The Quran repeatedly invites human beings to use their minds, to seek evidence, and to avoid blind attachment. This invitation is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is part of the Muslim's accountability before God. For accepting what one hears without questioning is acting on conjecture, and the Quran draws a clear distinction between conjecture and truth.

Two of the most frequently repeated expressions in the Quran are striking: "Will you not use your reason?" (Al-Anbiya, 21:10) and "Bring your proof, if you are truthful." (An-Naml, 27:64) These two calls concisely reveal the epistemological foundation of Islam: a claim is meaningful only when it rests on a foundation. This foundation can take three forms. The first is revelation — the Quran — which serves as the absolute and unchanging source of authority in religious rulings, the highest evidence a Muslim can appeal to. The second is observable reality — knowledge produced through observation, experimentation, and reason that is repeatable and verifiable. The third is logical consistency — the requirement that a claim does not contradict itself and rests on a rationally coherent basis.

Any claim lacking these three foundations, no matter how widely accepted, cannot rise above the level of conjecture, interpretation, or assumption. The Quran's call is clear: a conscious, questioning, evidence-based faith must be held above blind, passive acceptance.

The Limits of Verbal Transmission: Opinion or Truth?

Certain expressions appear frequently in everyday religious discourse: "It is said that...", "A scholar once stated...", "Imam Shafi'i said this," "This is generally accepted." Such expressions do not convey certainty — they convey opinion. And blurring the boundary between opinion and truth leads to a serious epistemological error.

Verbal transmission is, by its very nature, subjective. It is open to interpretation, carries no binding authority, and cannot claim certainty unless it contains evidence. The critical point here is this: the widespread adoption of an opinion does not make it truth. History is full of beliefs held by vast majorities that were later shown to be false. Truth is determined not by popularity, but by evidence.

For this reason, a Muslim asking of every claim they hear, "What is this information based on?" is not an act of skeptical reflex — it is, on the contrary, the requirement of the conscious faith that the Quran commands. A claim without evidence may be a valuable opinion; but it is not binding truth. No one is obligated to accept something simply because it has been said.

The Fallacy of Authority: The Problem of "Such-and-Such Scholar Said"

One of the most persistent problems recurring throughout Islamic history — and continuing into the present — is the elevation of scholars to positions of unquestioned authority. The Quran explicitly criticizes this tendency:

> "They took their rabbis and monks as lords besides God, and also the Messiah, son of Mary. Yet they were commanded to worship only one God." (At-Tawbah, 9:31)

While this verse criticizes the People of the Book for deifying their clergy, it carries a powerful warning for Muslims as well. Following religious figures without question, granting them the authority to declare things lawful or unlawful, treating their words as evidence — all of these represent a deviation that the Quran rejects. For the authority to define what is lawful and unlawful belongs to God alone.

History also reinforces this point: scholars have contradicted one another, issued conflicting rulings, and even declared each other outside the fold of Islam. This demonstrates that human speech is structurally fallible. No matter how deep a scholar's knowledge runs, that scholar is not infallible, and everything they say carries value only to the extent of the evidence it rests upon.

The distinction between a true scholar and an authority figure becomes clear here. A true scholar presents the evidence they hold, remains open to questioning, and does not shy away from grounding their claims. An authority figure, by contrast, has their words treated as evidence, goes unquestioned, and is shielded from criticism. In Islam, the second approach is not legitimate. Absolute authority belongs to God alone; the Messenger carries this authority only in the sense of conveying revelation. Beyond that, every human being's words gain value in proportion to the evidence they bring.

Scientific Claims: Law or Interpretation?

In the modern era, the label "scientific" is often presented as a marker of unquestionable truth. But here too, a similar distinction must be made: is everything called "scientific" genuinely science?

Genuine scientific knowledge has three essential characteristics: it must be testable through experiment, observable, and repeatable. Knowledge that meets these criteria approaches the status of law or reliable fact. But a claim that does not meet these criteria remains, at its core, a theory, a hypothesis, or a philosophical interpretation — regardless of whether it carries the "scientific" label.

This is where a critical distinction comes into play: the difference between fact and interpretation. A fact is a reality that is fixed and repeatable through experiment. Interpretation is the way a mind makes meaning of that fact. A scientific datum may be correct; but the philosophical meaning loaded onto that datum is not always correct. The Muslim mind is obligated to make this distinction. Not to reject scientific data — but to read with a critical eye the interpretations imposed upon that data. This is precisely the requirement of the intellectual consistency the Quran commands. Because a popular philosophical paradigm, no matter how widely accepted, cannot rise above being an untested interpretation.

What Is Truth and How Is It Understood?

When all these axes come together, how truth ought to be defined also becomes clear. Truth is knowledge that is supported by evidence, internally consistent, and found to be in harmony with reality. When any one of these three elements is missing, one is speaking not of truth but — at best — of a claim or assumption.

Accordingly, the following equations hold:

- A claim without evidence is not binding.

- Authority is not a guarantee of truth.

- Widespread acceptance is not a measure of correctness.

These three principles form the core of Islamic epistemology and determine the intellectual posture a Muslim must adopt when faced with any claim. The correct approach consists of these steps: First, listen and try to understand. Then question, and seek the foundation it rests on. Evaluate its evidence: does it rest on revelation, observable reality, or logical consistency? If these foundations are present, accept it; if not, that claim is not binding upon you. Acceptance made without this process is not conscious faith — it is imitation.

Conclusion

Islam is a religion that does not regard questioning as a sign of weak faith, but rather commands it as the requirement of conscious faith. The Quran's call to humanity is clear and multifaceted: use your mind, seek evidence, do not attach yourself blindly. This call commands a way of life grounded not in rumor, tradition, authority, or popular interpretation — but in evidence alone.

Rumor is not religion. Tradition is not absolute truth. Authority is not truth. A scientific label does not turn philosophical interpretation into law. Beyond all of these, the Muslim mind — which reasons, observes, questions, and demands evidence under the guidance of revelation — neither serves human beings nor acts on conjecture. Truth is understood only through evidence. And a claim without evidence, no matter how powerful the voices from which it emerges, is nothing more than an opinion. When a Muslim acts with this awareness, they fulfill their responsibility to both their intellect and their faith.

Questioning: The Foundation of Firm Faith, Not Apostasy

A Misplaced Fear

In modern religious discourse, particularly in conservative circles, a warning is frequently heard: "If you question too much, you will leave the faith." This sentence has been used for centuries as both a caution and a threat. Yet reversing this proposition rests on far more solid ground, both historically and religiously: the person who does not question may be drawing not from religion itself, but from a distorted version of it. For the path to truth is not traversed with eyes closed, but through an open mind, a critical gaze, and evidence-based understanding.

The Qur'an's Call to Reason and Questioning

The Qur'an is one of the most powerful intellectual manifestos in human history. In hundreds of verses, it directly or indirectly invites humanity to think, observe, reason, and question. Phrases such as "Will you not reason?", "Will you not reflect?", "Do you not see?", and "Will you not take heed?" occupy a central place in the Qur'an's style. These expressions are not incidental. The Qur'an defines faith not as blind submission, but as conscious and aware acceptance. Verse 36 of Surah Al-Isra is particularly illuminating in this regard: "Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge." This verse is not merely a prohibition; it is also a clear declaration of the importance given to knowledge, evidence, and reason. While the Qur'an explicitly

forbids taking conjecture — unverified, unconfirmed information — as a guide, it encourages humanity to investigate, question, and verify. In this context, questioning is not a sign of drifting away from religion; on the contrary, it is a mental disposition directly commanded by the Qur'an.

The History of Blind Imitation: How Did They Go Astray?

The deepest religious deviations in history are not the product of rigorous criticism, but the cumulative result of unquestioned imitation. Two concrete examples make this reality plainly visible.

The Formation of the Trinity in Christianity

The earliest Christians accepted our Prophet Jesus as a prophet. However, over centuries, generations imitating one another first positioned him as "the Son of God," then, within the framework of the Trinity doctrine, as "God" Himself. This transformation did not occur through a sudden rupture, but through the gradual layering of beliefs passed on without question. This belief, dogmatized at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), was nothing other than the institutional endorsement of centuries of imitative accumulation.

The "Ayn-Mim-Sin" Doctrine in Nusayrism

A similar process occurred among the Nusayris, a community that identifies itself as Muslim. Today, one of this community's core beliefs rests on a theology summarized by the symbol "Ayn-Mim-Sin": a belief system in which Ali represents the divine essence (Mana), our Prophet Muhammad represents the Name, and Salman al-Farisi represents the role of the Bab (gate) — a system that plainly contradicts Islam's principle of tawhid (monotheism). This structure, too, is the product of a tradition passed down through generations without question. The mechanism of imitation is so powerful that people can adopt a profound religious deviation without even realizing what faith they are actually following.

The Qur'an's Harshest Criticism: The Cult of Ancestors

The Qur'an critiques no community as harshly as those who blindly imitate their forefathers. Verse 170 of Surah Al-Baqarah represents the peak of this critique:

> "When they are told, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'We will follow what we found our forefathers doing.' Even though their forefathers had no understanding and were not guided?"

This verse was not revealed merely to judge past communities. It contains a universal warning: regardless of the age or geography in which one lives, an unquestioned tradition can sever a person from truth. In a situation where the ancestors were not on the right path and held mistaken beliefs, imitating them solely on the grounds of "tradition" is an attitude the Qur'an categorically does not sanction. This principle applies not only to the Arabs of the pre-Islamic era, but equally to every belief accepted without question today under the name of "religious tradition" or "school of law."

What Happens When Questioning Stops?

In communities where critical thinking is suspended and imitation is presented as a virtue, three dangerous processes inevitably come into play:

1. The Idolization of Individuals

Where there is no questioning, religious scholars, sheikhs, or historical figures gradually become authorities attributed with infallibility. Criticism is coded as disrespect. This process paves the way for a personality cult that runs contrary to the spirit of tawhid.

2. Symbol Overtaking Substance

When meaning becomes non-negotiable, symbols are sanctified. Rituals are considered sacred independently of their content. Religion ceases to be a system of meaning and becomes a mechanical set of actions. When reason is taken out of the equation, only form remains; substance is lost.

3. The Instrumentalization of the Text

In an environment without questioning, sacred texts are taken out of context and interpreted to serve the interests of particular groups, sects, or political structures. Throughout history, there are countless examples of hadith, exegetical literature, and jurisprudential rulings being instrumentalized in this way.

The Relationship Between Schools of Law, Hadith Tradition, and Imitation

When the formation process of the schools of law in Islamic history is examined, it becomes apparent that the majority of jurisprudential divergences were based on following authority rather than independent reasoning. The opinion of a school gradually became a dogma closed to criticism for that school's followers. Yet the imams of those schools were themselves scholars who often debated one another and questioned their own views. Imam al-Shafi'i saying "If my opinion is correct, its alternative may also be correct," or Imam Malik's ability to say "I do not know" in the face of certain hadiths, reflects the critical spirit of that generation. However, subsequent generations froze and institutionalized this dynamic culture of debate. Questioning closed; imitation began. And the unquestioned schools of law gradually came to be lived as if they were the religion itself. The hadith tradition contains a similar tension. All hadiths were fabricated after the death of our Prophet Muhammad; yet today they are accepted simply because they appear in sources such as the Kutub al-Sittah, without even being filtered through the Qur'an. A questioning mind evaluates these false beliefs critically, while an imitative mentality accepts everything transmitted without question as binding.

Faith and Question: Enemies or Allies?

The claim that questioning weakens faith rests on a deep misunderstanding. In reality, a faith built on solid foundations is not intolerant of questions; on the contrary, it feeds on questions and grows stronger. An oak tree rooted deep in the soil

withstands a storm. But a faith built on superficial imitation is shaken by the very first serious question. For this reason, the fear of questioning reflects not faith, but a fragile belief resting on imitation. The profile of the believer idealized by the Qur'an is not one who submits with eyes closed, but one who sees the evidence, reasons, and is aware. Prophet Ibrahim's questioning of the idols is exalted in the Qur'an not as a deviation, but as the seeking of the source of tawhid.

Individual Responsibility and the Transfer of Will

The Qur'an makes clear that on the Day of Judgment, no one can give account on behalf of another. Responsibility is individual. The first condition of this individuality is the exercise of reason. One who does not question consents to letting others decide what to believe, what is right and what is wrong. This is nothing other than the transfer of will. A person's surrendering their will to a sheikh, a school of law's tradition, or an unquestioned cult of ancestors directly contradicts the Qur'an's understanding of individual responsibility. On the Day of Resurrection, justifications such as "but my sheikh said so" or "but our forefathers did it this way" will not be accepted. On that day, everyone will give account for their own reason and their own will.

Questioning Faith, Rooted Faith

The sentence "If you question, you will leave the faith" does not, in reality, protect religion; it freezes religion and turns it into a historical artifact. The real danger lies not in questioning, but in ceasing to question. For when questions stop, criticism stops; when criticism stops, imitation begins; when imitation begins, deviation becomes inevitable. The human being the Qur'an addresses is one who puts their mind to work, looks at the evidence, filters the inheritance received from their forefathers through critical scrutiny, and ultimately grounds their faith in conscious acceptance. Questioning is not the beginning of leaving the faith; it is the beginning of understanding it properly. A healthy faith is intolerant not of questions, but of remaining without answers. And a truly rooted faith does not waver even beneath the deepest questions — for that faith rests not on imitation, but on understanding; not on tradition, but on evidence; not on fear, but on conscious acknowledgment.

A Quran-Centered Muslim Mind: From Blind Imitation to Verified Conviction

Throughout every era of Islamic history, one of the most fundamental questions Muslims have faced is this: How do we understand religion, and by what standard do we live? In theory, the answer has almost always been the same: by the Quran. Yet in practice, the picture has looked very different. Sects, communities, orders, television clerics, and YouTube preachers have gradually moved ahead of religion itself, and people have begun following human interpretations rather than the word of Allah. Here we will examine how this rupture occurred, what the Quran says on the matter, and how today's Muslims — especially the youth — can find a way out.

Blind Imitation: The Oldest and Most Widespread Trap

Verse 170 of Surah Al-Baqarah paints a striking picture. Allah conveys the response

people give when told, "Follow what Allah has revealed." They say: "No, we will follow what we found our forefathers doing." The Quran does not present this attitude as a deviation unique to the polytheists of that era. The warning is formulated in a way that speaks to every age, because blind imitation is not bound to a particular geography or period — it is one of the most deeply rooted tendencies of the human self.

Today this tendency takes different forms: the devotee who abandons the Quran and fragments into factions, accepting every word of the community leader as truth; the student who follows a legal school and treats the imam's opinion as ruling; the viewer who regards the cleric seen on television as the final authority on religion. All of these are, at their core, modern manifestations of the same Al-Baqarah 170 tableau. No questioning takes place. No thinking occurs. In place of forefathers, community founders, school manuals, and media figures have simply stepped in.

Theological Education and the Systemic Problem

Perhaps the most critical dimension of the issue lies in the structure of religious education. Faculties of theology are institutions theoretically expected to teach Islam. Yet in practice the Quran is deemed insufficient, and the greater part of the curriculum consists of legal schools, jurisprudential methodologies, and the views of hadith compilers. The student who receives this education, when later confronted with a question, turns not to the Quran but to the legal texts memorized or the opinions relayed by a teacher — and in doing so drifts entirely from sound religious knowledge, unable even to calculate prayer times, pushing the Quran into the background while foregrounding human interpretation. This situation produces a vicious cycle: the community founder expounds his own views and his followers adopt them; the theologian conveys what he learned from the school manual and his students memorize it; the media figure broadcasts his own interpretation on television and viewers mistake it for religion. At no link in the chain is there direct recourse to the Quran or independent thought.

The Mind the Quran Demands: Ulul-Albab

Verse 18 of Surah Az-Zumar is one of the clearest verses describing the ideal Muslim mind: "Those who listen to speech and follow the best of it. Those are the ones Allah has guided, and those are people of understanding."

The Arabic for "people of understanding" here is Ulul-Albab. This concept appears repeatedly in the Quran, and each time it points not to a passive, imitative mind but to an intellect that questions, listens, discerns, and chooses what is most correct. The key point is this: the verse defines not merely hearing a single view, but listening to many words and passing them through the filter of reason. This is the exact opposite of blind adherence. A person who adopts the community leader's words without question is not Ulul-Albab. One who accepts the school manual or catechism as correct while not considering the Quran sufficient is not Ulul-Albab. One who takes every interpretation of a television personality as religion itself is not Ulul-Albab. The Quran explicitly demands of the Muslim an active mind and independent reasoning.

The Danger of the Self: Making One's Desire a God

At this point, however, an important balance must be established. While the Quran rejects blind imitation, it simultaneously emphasizes that one's own self and desires must not be made into a god. Verse 23 of Surah Al-Jathiyah carries an extremely powerful warning on this: "Have you seen the one who takes his own desire as his god? Allah has led him astray based on knowledge, sealed his hearing and heart, and placed a cover over his sight. Who then can guide him after Allah?"

Verse 53 of Surah Yusuf reinforces this balance with a personal admission: "I do not acquit myself; indeed the self is inclined toward evil, except when my Lord shows mercy."

Thus a Quran-centered mind is neither the slave of another nor the prisoner of its own self. The balance lies in reading the Quran with an independent intellect, alongside empirical science, and with a humble conscience. The claim "I understand only through my own reason, regardless of clear verses in the Quran or established scientific evidence" is just as dangerous as blind imitation, for it is here that desire steps in.

The Curriculum of Accountability: Az-Zukhruf 44

Verse 44 of Surah Az-Zukhruf makes plain on what basis the reckoning of the Day of Judgment will occur: "Indeed, it is a Reminder for you and your people, and you will be questioned."

The "Reminder" here is the Quran. The reckoning will be according to the Quran. This is a defining truth. If the accounting on the Day of Resurrection will be from the Quran, then for a person to shape their life around the minutiae of jurisprudence manuals, the fatwas of community founders, or the legal opinions of school imams produces a profound inconsistency. The person ends up having followed a guide for which they cannot render account.

Ages 20–25: The Critical Threshold of Passage from Imitation to Conviction

In Islam, the concepts of taqlid (imitation) and tahqiq (verified conviction) mark an important distinction. Taqlid is adopting someone's view without questioning. Tahqiq is believing through research, thought, and evidence. Islamic scholars have historically placed tahqiq far above taqlid in theory, for a person cannot know whether what they believe without investigation is truly correct. Yet in practice, throughout history, all have been imitators.

The period between ages 20 and 25 is the most favorable time in a person's life to make this transition. The individual begins to question the inheritance received from childhood; they have reached the maturity to evaluate things with their own mind. A young person who reads the Quran in this period not through another's interpretation but directly through their own intellect and conscience — who measures everything they have learned against the Quran, retaining what holds up and setting aside what does not — is genuinely on the path to becoming Ulul-Albab.

Moreover, this is not merely a matter of personal growth. A young person who reads the Quran with an original mind can share their thoughts through every available medium: articles, videos, poetry, stories, conferences, and books. In doing so they both deepen their own process of conviction and contribute to the spread of a Quran-centered culture of thought at the societal level.

The Foundation of Unity: Al Imran 103

It should also be noted that a Quran-centered approach does not mean anarchy. Verse 103 of Surah Al Imran commands: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided."

The rope of Allah is the Quran. The Quran forms the ground of the ummah's unity. Unity built around sects, communities, and personal interpretations is a false unity and a genuine source of division. But when everyone is directly connected to the Quran, a common reference point is established. This is the true foundation of both religious and societal unity.

In summary, the Quran is sufficient for Muslims. No human being is infallible — not the community founder, not the school imam, not the theology professor, not the YouTube cleric. Infallibility belongs solely to the word of Allah. Al-Baqarah 170 directs its warning to the imitator of every age. Az-Zumar 18 defines the duty of every age's person of reason. Az-Zukhruf 44 sets out the curriculum of reckoning on the Day of Judgment. And Al-Jathiyah 23 and Yusuf 53 draw the limits of both intellect and desire.

The Muslim who stands within this equation is neither the slave of another nor the prisoner of their own self. They are an individual who submits directly to the word of Allah, reads with their own mind, tests with their own conscience, and speaks in their own voice. This is the human type to which the Quran calls.

The Problem of Quranic Sufficiency and Intellectual Authority in Islam

Throughout Islamic history, the understanding of religion has been shaped not only by the Quran, but also by hadith collections, scholarly legal opinions, Sufi teachings, communal structures, and theology faculties. Whether this plurality represents a richness or a deviation remains a subject of ongoing debate. The question "Should we abandon the legal schools and follow our own reasoning?" is frequently raised — yet this question, without realizing it, contains a serious logical fallacy: the legal schools (madhabs) are themselves nothing more than the systematized personal views of individuals who lived in the past. The real issue, therefore, is not whose opinion to follow, but rather what the true source of religion is.

Everyone Presents Their Own Opinion as Religion

Every person who speaks in the religious domain — whether aware of it or not — is presenting their own interpretation. This is an unavoidable reality. The problem, however, is that over time this interpretation becomes identified with religion itself. When someone is capable of founding a community, their ideas take on an institutional form. Individuals who join the community decades after the founder's

death come to accept those ideas as an unquestionable authority. Someone unable to found a community spreads their ideas through books, letters, or sermons. These writings may not directly produce a following, but they can deeply influence some readers — and may even plant the seeds of a new community. In both cases the outcome is the same: a human being's opinion gradually comes to be accepted as religion itself. This process does not advance through deliberate manipulation but most often through sincere belief — and that is precisely what makes it more dangerous.

Psychological Disorders and Religion: A Neglected Dimension

Some influential figures in Islamic history, when assessed from a modern psychiatric perspective, appear to have exhibited severe psychological symptoms. Chief among these are ideas of reference — a condition in which a person interprets random events, television programs, song lyrics, passages in books, or news stories as messages directed specifically at themselves. This is especially pronounced when such experiences are cast in the second person singular or plural. Two striking examples:

- İskender Ali Mihr came to believe that Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur collection spoke about him and had been written specifically for him. He inserted his own name into his Quranic translation, declared himself a messenger (rasul) and the Mahdi, acquired disciples, and gained followers for his views.

- Rashad Khalifa held both ideas of reference and ideas of discovery. He claimed to have "discovered" that the number 19 in the Quran was a miraculous cipher, declared himself a messenger, rejected the final two verses of Surah al-Tawbah, and asserted that the Quran referred to him by name, adding his name to certain verses. These views, too, found adherents.

Both individuals experienced their beliefs as utterly real. Such symptoms are psychiatrically associated with diagnoses including schizophrenia, delusional disorder, severe bipolar episodes, and depression with psychotic features. These individuals defend their views with great sincerity and intensity. After their deaths, their disciples or those they influenced carry these ideas forward across generations. In this way, thoughts that originated in a psychological disorder can, over centuries, assume the guise of religious truth.

The Logical Fallacy in the Question "Should We Abandon the Schools and Follow Our Own Reasoning?"

This question appears reasonable on the surface but is fundamentally misleading. A madhab, whatever it is called, takes as its basis the interpretation of a single human being — Abu Hanifa, Imam al-Shafi'i, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, or Imam Malik. No matter how learned these individuals were, they were human sources who made mistakes, were influenced by the conditions of their era, and held differing views on contested matters. The question then becomes: "Should we follow the view of someone who lived in the past, or someone living today?" There is no epistemic difference between the two. Both are human interpretations. The fundamental problem is the habit of

equating any human interpretation with religion itself. The Quran criticizes this stance explicitly:

> "And when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger,' they say, 'Sufficient for us is that upon which we found our fathers.' Even though their fathers knew nothing and were not guided?" (Al-Ma'idah 5:104)

The Sufficiency of the Quran

The Quran declares its own sufficiency clearly and directly in multiple verses. These are not ambiguous expressions left open to commentary or supplementary sources — they are straightforward, explicit declarations:

> "We have not neglected in the Register a single thing." (Al-An'am 6:38)

> "Is it not sufficient for them that We revealed to you the Book which is recited to them?" (Al-'Ankabut 29:51)

> "...and We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims." (Al-Nahl 16:89)

Verse 44 of Surah al-Zukhruf further establishes that the reckoning on the Day of Judgment will be based solely on revelation: "Indeed, it is a reminder for you and your people, and you are going to be questioned." This verse states plainly: on the Day of Judgment, the inquiry will be conducted not according to a school of law, a book of hadith, or a community leader, but according to the Quran.

The Contradiction: "The Quran Is Sufficient" Yet Other Sources in Practice

To say one believes the Quran is sufficient, while in practice treating hadith and legal rulings as the primary sources of religion, is a logical contradiction. A thing cannot be both "sufficient" and "insufficient" at the same time. This contradiction manifests in practice as follows: following a legal school's ruling even when the Quran contains a clear verdict; placing hadith that contradict the Quran ahead of the Quran itself; and prioritizing the words of scholars over the Quran in religious matters. This stance — even if unconsciously — amounts to multiplying the sources of religion. The judgment of Allah is the Quran alone; no matter how valuable human opinions may be, they cannot be elevated to that status:

> "Is it the judgment of ignorance they desire? But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who are certain?" (Al-Ma'idah 5:50)

> "And He does not share His judgment with anyone." (Al-Kahf 18:26)

Abandoning the Quran

The lament of our Prophet Muhammad summarizes this matter with striking force:

> "And the Messenger has said, 'O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Quran as abandoned.'" (Al-Furqan 25:30)

To physically set the Quran aside in a corner of one's home is one form of

abandonment; to read it and then make other sources the center of one's religious life is equally an abandonment. To recite the words of the Quran while drifting from its spirit is the modern form of forsaking it.

Throughout Islamic history, many people — whether by developing a religious doctrine, founding a community, or spreading beliefs shaped by psychological disorder — have presented their own views as religion itself. Some of these views have been sustained for centuries, transmitted across generations, and have most often acquired an unquestionable status. Yet the Quran, amid all this confusion, offers a clear and unwavering criterion. On the Day of Judgment, the reference point will be neither a school founder, nor a community leader, nor a charismatic scholar. It will be the Quran alone. To live accordingly — to understand, to reflect upon, and to follow the Quran alone — is not a matter of personal preference; it is the natural consequence of faith.

> "Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon hearts?" (Muhammad 47:24)

Analysis Reaching to the Roots of Violence: Education, Meaning, and Spiritual Responsibility

Stabbings. Shootings. Suicides. All inside schools.

In Istanbul, a student attacked his teacher — Fatma, who lost her life. In Şanlıurfa, a school shooting left 16 wounded; the attacker took his own life. In Kahramanmaraş, a school massacre: 4 dead, 20 wounded — the eighth-grade attacker also died by suicide. As these news reports arrive one after another, society's reflex is usually the same: security cameras, metal detectors, harsher penalties. Yet this approach is no different from breaking the thermometer that shows the fire. The fire is still burning. We must ask the real question behind these events: Who are these children? What were they feeling? Where did the road that brought them to this point begin?

Portrait of a Suppressed Generation

Among children who exhibit violence, a common psychological profile emerges. Suppressed anger, a sense of worthlessness, deep loneliness, and unprocessed trauma. These four elements, alone or together, slowly destroy the individual's inner world. At some point, this destruction can no longer be contained — and it erupts outward, most often in its most devastating form. So why did these children end up this way? The answer must not be sought in a single institution or a single person. Family, school, society, the digital world, and an existential absence of meaning — each is a separate actor in this picture.

The Limits of School: Knowledge Is Not Enough

School teaches a child physics, chemistry, biology. These are valuable and necessary. But knowledge and character are different things. Drilling the periodic table into a child does not teach them to manage the anger within. Explaining mitosis does not relieve their loneliness. The education system has long been caught in the fallacy of equating the "successful student" with the "good person." Yet someone with a high

GPA can still be in a deep meaning crisis — just as in the world's most developed countries, young people with every material advantage fall into spirals of depression and addiction. At this point a serious question must be asked: Who is the child outside of school? What is their place within the universe? Does their life have meaning? An education system that contents itself with a curriculum without answering these questions leaves the child's inner world empty. That inner world, left empty, fills over time with anger, violence, or escape.

Spiritual Education: Not Compulsion, but Meaning

Humans and jinn, in the words of the Holy Quran, were created solely to worship God. This is not merely a religious declaration — it is a foundational truth that charts the existential map of the human being. When a person knows themselves, understands why they exist, and feels that they serve a purpose, they find inner peace. When severed from this connection, an ineffable void begins. Yet spiritual education is most often applied in the wrong way. As the Quran explicitly states, "There is no compulsion in religion." Religious values must be presented to children not through fear and pressure, but through love, curiosity, and beauty. The child who sits beside a praying parent — who may not yet fully grasp the meaning of prostration but feels the peace of that moment — will, in time, make that worship their own. The hope of paradise must be felt before the fear of hell; the infinity of mercy before the narrative of punishment. When schools operate with this understanding, spiritual education transforms from a block of information squeezed into a class period into a living, breathing body of values. Quranic verses must be taught not merely as memorization, but as something connected to life. Alongside the question "What is being described in this verse?" the question "What does this resemble in your own life?" must also be asked. This meaning-centered approach allows the child to think, internalize, and experience emotional release — all at once.

Is Misbehavior a Problem — or a Signal?

One of the deepest fallacies of the education system is its positioning of the silent, compliant student as the ideal. Yet the student who pushes rules, tests limits, and clashes with authority is, most of the time, a carrier of untapped potential. The well-behaved and silent student is obedient; easy to direct. But the misbehaving child most often carries suppressed energy, a high level of curiosity, and a mode of functioning that doesn't fit within the system. If this energy is suppressed, it turns into greater problems. If it is channeled, it transforms into productivity — scientists, leaders, writers, and artists can emerge from these very children. For this reason, the understanding of discipline must be fundamentally reconsidered. Expulsion or punishments involving violence cuts the child off from society and pushes them into deeper loneliness. The purpose of discipline must not be to punish, but to guide. Instead, the problem student should be given responsibility — making them accountable for classroom order, assigning project leadership, loading them with difficult but meaningful tasks channels their energy into constructive outlets. When the purpose of punishment changes, punishment itself is transformed: it becomes not a sanction, but a tool for growth. Of course, a balance must be maintained here. In cases of violence, persistent bullying, and clear violations of other students' rights,

simply assigning responsibility may not be sufficient. The safety and rights of others are also an inseparable part of this equation. The complete dissolution of teacher authority, the feeling among compliant students that they are being treated unjustly, and the normalization of boundary violations — these are among the most visible costs of a lack of discipline. The issue is not to abolish punishment, but to transform its spirit.

The Explosion of Unexpressed Emotions

Violence is, most often, what cannot be put into words being written on the body. When a child cannot express their anger, pain, shame, or loneliness in words, these emotions keep accumulating. At some point the accumulation overflows — and where it overflows is, most often, someone else's body. Starting from this reality, opening channels of expression must be an urgent educational priority. Writing, poetry, art, and sport are not merely subjects — they are tools that contribute to the protection of mental health. The process of transforming something into poetry in particular converts emotion into word, provides inner release, and reduces aggression. Telling a student "sit down and write a poem about this now" both makes them think and confronts them with their own inner world. Practices such as writing essays and then poetry on Quranic verses can serve both as spiritual guidance and as an emotional processing tool for students displaying challenging behaviors. What matters is that this not be presented as punishment. The approach of "let's think about this together — you explain it in your own words" creates an entirely different effect than "because you did this, you will memorize this verse."

Bullying: The Name of the Invisible Wound

Behind many incidents of school violence lies exclusion, ridicule, and being left alone. These experiences deeply wound a child's sense of self. The feeling of worthlessness turns over time into anger, and anger into vengeance. Bullying is not only physical. Being ignored, excluded from a group, and being humiliated on social media all leave marks just as deep as physical assault. Moreover, these wounds usually escape adults' notice — because they are invisible. The establishment of a clear and consistent stance against bullying in schools is essential. But beyond this, a sense of belonging must be actively built. Every student must feel that they belong somewhere in the classroom and in the school. Teachers must be not merely lesson deliverers, but guides who see, hear, and understand.

Psychological Support: Not a Luxury, but a Necessity

In many schools in Turkey, there is either no school counselor, or the one present carries a student load far beyond what they can bear. This situation must be addressed as a preventable component of school violence. Early identification of at-risk students, regular one-on-one meetings with students, and keeping the psychological support system active are vitally important for the real prevention of violence. It is not enough to simply impart knowledge to a child whose inner world is unprocessed, who feels alone, and who carries anger. The inner world must be reached first.

The Place of the Family: The Invisible Half of Education

A child spends an average of six to seven hours at school each day. All remaining time is spent with the family, or in the environment the family has created. This simple arithmetic alone reveals how determinative the family's role in education is. The Holy Quran reminds us, "And know that your wealth and your children are but a trial, and that with Allah is a mighty reward" (Al-Anfal, 28), that raising children is not merely a biological act but a profound spiritual responsibility. Providing a child with a good school, healthy nutrition, and a safe home is certainly necessary. But Islam's understanding of child-rearing goes far beyond this: instilling moral values in the child, nourishing them spiritually, and strengthening their connection to God are among the most fundamental duties of parents. Yet many families are either unaware of this responsibility or do not know how to fulfill it. Family environments filled with violence, pressure, and neglect inflict damage on the child's inner world that is difficult to repair. For this reason, keeping school-family cooperation active and offering education to families as well is an indispensable part of any holistic solution.

The Meaning Crisis of the Modern World and Addiction

This picture is not unique to Turkey. National studies conducted in the United States reveal that 21.8 million people aged 12 and above use drugs, and that fifty percent of the same age group are alcohol users. These figures are not merely signs of a public health problem — they are signs of deep cracks in the spiritual architecture of civilization. Addiction is most often interpreted as a weakness of will. Yet this is both an insufficient and a dangerous definition. Addiction is, in fact, an attempt to escape from a weight the individual cannot bear. The person is most often not trying to numb pain, but meaninglessness. The questions "Who am I?", "What am I doing in this world?", and "Where am I going?" form the foundational pillars of an individual's psychological health. Identity, purpose, and direction — these three elements are the existential strivings that allow a person to hold on to life. The constant stimuli of social media, consumer culture, and a speed-driven lifestyle cover these questions over. Within this noise, the human being stops asking who they are and begins measuring how much they have. But these metrics do not quench existential thirst — on the contrary, they lead to deeper dissatisfaction. Viktor Frankl, in the theory he distilled from the Nazi concentration camps, argues that the most fundamental drive of the human being is not pleasure or power, but meaning. The person who cannot find meaning is left helpless in the face of suffering. Islam voices this reality from a far more foundational perspective: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Adh-Dhariyat, 56). This verse charts the existential map of the human being. The individual in relationship with their Creator can understand who they are, what they exist for, and where they are going.

Fitra: The Human Being's Indelible Compass

In Islamic thought, the concept of fitra refers to the original nature and universal inclinations of the human being. When a person lives in accordance with their fitra, they find inner peace; when they deviate from this harmony, unease and loss of

meaning become inevitable. The individual severed from their fitra seeks this fulfillment elsewhere — and what they find is only a temporary numbing, followed by a deeper void. Viewed from this perspective, addiction ceases to be a purely medical problem and becomes a symptom of spiritual lostness. When a person loses themselves, they become ready to cling to anything that might fill the void. In the same way, violence too is not merely an individual pathology, but an outward expression of a void of meaning and the collapse of the inner world. That student in Istanbul, that child in Kahramanmaraş — they may never have received an answer to the question of who they are. They may have grown up in a world where they did not feel valued, seen, or understood.

Social Brotherhood: The Responsibility of Believers

This problem remains incomplete when addressed only at the individual level. Islam defines society not as a collection of disconnected individuals, but as a whole composed of people who act with a sense of shared responsibility and who are one another's wali — guardian, companion, and guide. The 71st verse of Surah At-Tawbah expresses this reality concisely: Believers are one another's friends, protectors, and guides; they spread goodness, prevent evil, connect to God through prayer, and contribute to society through charity. This understanding positions school violence not merely as a security problem for the state to solve, but as a matter of brotherhood in which every segment of society must feel responsibility. One who sees the loneliness of the child next door does not report them — they reach out. A teacher who notices a change in a student's mood does not treat it as a classroom management problem — they make time to speak with that child.

Violence Is Not an Ending — It Is a Cry

The news coming from Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, and Kahramanmaraş cannot be filed away as security incidents. These events are the sharpest expression of the deep crisis of meaning and belonging in which society — and especially its youth — finds itself. The solution is multidimensional. Strengthening psychological support systems, a firm stance against bullying, family education, opening channels of expression, and the root transformation of the understanding of discipline — all of these are parts of this solution. But at the heart of all of them lies this truth: The human being wants not only knowledge, but meaning. Not only lessons, but to be seen. Not only rules, but love. Both addiction and violence are a cry. And the true response to this cry must be not merely legal or technical — it must be existential. Because the deepest mark is the one left by love flowing from heart to heart.

The Concept of Miracles in Islam: An Evaluation from a Quranic Perspective

The subject of miracles has been a matter of significant theological and epistemological debate throughout the history of Islamic thought. While traditional Islamic literature contains hundreds of miracle narratives attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, the question of how well these narratives align with the Quran's own statements is a critical problem that needs to be revisited in the modern era.

The Semantic and Theological Framework of the Miracle Concept

The word "miracle" (mucize) derives from the Arabic root meaning "to render incapable, to overpower," and lexically carries the meanings of "that which renders one helpless, that which cannot be resisted, that which cannot be replicated, that which is wondrous." Conceptually, a miracle is defined as "an act that God causes, creates, and manifests through His messengers for the purpose of convincing and persuading."

Miracle Terminology in the Quran

The word "miracle" (mucize) is not used in the Quran. Instead, the concept of āya (sign) is preferred. The word āya carries a multilayered meaning that encompasses both revelation and miracle: it means "a clear mark, a proof or sign that establishes something." This terminological choice is not accidental; it emphasizes that every act of creation and intervention by God in the universe is in fact a "sign." According to the Quran, the true agent of a miracle is God. That is, a miracle is fundamentally an act belonging to God, not to the messengers:

> "We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those We have told you about and those We have not told you about. It was not for any messenger to bring a sign except by God's permission. When God's command comes, it will be decided with truth, and the falsifiers will then be lost." (Surah Ghāfir, 40:78)

This verse makes it clear that the source of miracles belongs exclusively to God, and that messengers occupy only the role of an instrument in this regard.

The Function and Limitations of Miracles

While the Quran mentions various miracles performed through past messengers, it also states that these miracles were often ineffective in changing the beliefs of the communities they were addressed to. Miracles such as the staff of Moses, the raising of the dead by Jesus, and the she-camel of Salih may have convinced some members of the communities they addressed, yet they could not change the stubborn denial of the majority.

Persuasive Miracles and Punitive Destructions

The Quran speaks of two types of extraordinary events:

1. Miracles for persuasion and proof: Signs shown to prove the truthfulness of the messenger and to convince people.

2. Punitive destructions: Extraordinary events that occurred as punishment for communities that went to extremes in transgression, perversity, and oppression — such as the people of 'Ād being destroyed by a hurricane, the Thamūd by an earthquake, and the people of Lot by the overturning of their cities.

The distinction between these two categories is important. The second type of event no longer carries a persuasive or probative purpose; it is punitive in function.

The Question of Whether the Prophet Muhammad Was Given Miracles

Traditional Islamic literature has attributed hundreds of miracles to the Prophet Muhammad. However, when the Quran's own statements are examined, a different picture emerges. While the Quran speaks explicitly of miracles occurring through other messengers, it states in numerous verses that the Prophet Muhammad was not given miracles.

Quranic Responses to Demands for Miracles

The polytheists repeatedly demanded that the Prophet Muhammad perform miracles. In its responses to these demands, the Quran clearly states that the Prophet Muhammad could not and would not perform a miracle:

> "Why have signs not been sent down to him from his Lord? Say: The signs are only with God, and I am only a clear warner." (Surah al-'Ankabūt, 29:50)

> "Say: I have no power to benefit or harm myself, except as God wills. Every community has an appointed term. When their term comes, they can neither delay it an hour nor advance it." (Surah Yūnus, 10:49)

One of the most striking verses is the following:

> "If their aversion is hard on you, then if you can, seek a tunnel into the earth or a ladder to the sky and bring them a sign. Had God willed, He could have gathered them to guidance. So do not be of the ignorant." (Surah al-An'ām, 6:35)

This verse states that the Prophet Muhammad could not produce a miracle, and that this grieved him, but that God could enable it if He willed. The verse also warns the messenger by saying "do not be of the ignorant," cautioning him against yielding to the demands of those who sought miracles.

The Sociology of the Tradition of Fabricating Miracles

The underlying motivation for attributing hundreds of miracles to the Prophet Muhammad is the desire to "compete" him against other messengers. The tendency of every community to glorify its own messenger also manifested itself in Islamic society, leading to the attribution of ever more and ever greater miracles to the Prophet Muhammad in order to place him above other prophets. However, this approach contains several fundamental errors:

The First Error: Misunderstanding the Source of Miracles

Miracles are not the product of the personal abilities, superiority, or powers of messengers. Miracles occur solely through the will and volition of God. Therefore, even if a thousand miracles occurred through a given messenger, this does not confer any superiority upon that messenger. What matters is not the "instrument" but the power that governs the instrument.

The Second Error: Discrimination Among Messengers

Being a Muslim requires believing in all messengers without distinction, without setting them apart from one another. This is explicitly emphasized in the Quran:

> "The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and so have the believers. All of them have believed in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers. 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers,' they say." (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:285)

From the first messenger to the last, all messengers are God's messengers. Just as the Messenger Abraham, the Messenger Moses, and the Messenger Jesus are messengers of God, so too is the Messenger Muhammad. They all share the same God, and all were tasked with presenting the same message — the religion of monotheism — to humanity.

The Third Error: Misunderstanding the Purpose of Miracles

Miracles exist not to glorify the persons of the messengers, but to present to human understanding the fact that their messengership comes from God. However, miracles came to be perceived as if they were the personal achievements of messengers, and the messengers began to be remembered not for the message they delivered but for the miracles that occurred through their persons.

Analysis of Disputed Miracle Narratives

Some miracles attributed to the Prophet Muhammad in traditional sources have been attempted to be grounded in Quranic verses. Let us examine some of these claims:

The Claim of the Splitting of the Moon

The verse "The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has split" (Surah al-Qamar, 54:1) has been interpreted as a miracle in which the Prophet Muhammad split the moon in two. However, this interpretation is problematic from both linguistic and contextual perspectives.

Linguistic Analysis:

The word inshiqāq does not mean the splitting of something into two parts, but rather a crack or fissure appearing in something. This becomes clearer when words derived from the same root in the Quran are examined:

- "When the sky is split open" (al-Infiṭār, 84:1)

- "Then We split the earth, splitting it open" ('Abasa, 80:26)

In all of these verses, the "splitting" is associated with the Day of Judgment.

Contextual Analysis:

The subsequent verses of Surah al-Qamar are as follows:

> "And if they see a sign, they turn away and say, 'Ongoing magic.'" (al-Qamar, 54:2)

The particle in here is a conditional particle carrying the meaning of "even if they were to see." That is, the verse is saying: "Even if the moon were truly to split, they still would not believe."

Logical Problems:

1. Lack of witnesses: For such a striking event, there is no testimony in historical records. No such event is recorded in Arab polytheist, Byzantine, or Sasanian sources.

2. Scientific impossibility: It is physically impossible for the moon to actually split into two pieces and then rejoin, and such an event would destroy all life on Earth.

3. Contradiction with the logic of miracles: Miracles are performed openly, in a manner visible to all. A miracle performed secretly, without anyone's knowledge, is meaningless.

4. Geographic absurdity: Narratives state that the pieces of the moon descended on either side of a mountain. Yet even a single piece of the moon would not fit within the Arabian Peninsula.

For reference:

- Diameter of the Moon: approximately 3,474 km

- Radius: approximately 1,737 km

- Surface area: approximately 37.9 million km² (close to the surface area of the African continent)

- Volume: approximately 2% of Earth's volume

- Mass: approximately 1/81 of Earth's mass

- Earth's diameter: approximately 12,742 km — meaning the Moon's diameter is about one-quarter that of Earth.

The Claim of the Splitting of the Chest

Hadith sources narrate that the Prophet Muhammad's chest was split open on four separate occasions and his heart cleansed. These narratives are grounded in the verse "Did We not expand your breast for you?" (Surah al-Inshirāḥ, 94:1).

The True Meaning of the Verse:

The expression "opening of the chest" is used figuratively in the Quran and means "relief, ease, and attainment of peace." This can be understood from other verses:

> "So whoever God wants to guide — He expands his breast to Islam." (Surah al-An'ām, 6:125)

> "Is one whose breast God has expanded to Islam, so that he follows a light from his Lord...?" (Surah al-Zumar, 39:22)

In these verses, "the opening of the chest" clearly means not a surgical operation but an opening of the heart to Islam, a finding of peace.

Contextual Analysis:

When read together with Surah al-Ḍuḥā, which was revealed before Surah al-Inshirāḥ, the meaning of the opening of the chest becomes clearer. In Surah al-Ḍuḥā, God provides moral support to the Prophet Muhammad, who is in a difficult situation, reminding him of past blessings and giving glad tidings that the future will be good:

> "Did He not find you an orphan and give you refuge? Did He not find you lost and guide you? Did He not find you poor and enrich you?" (Surah al-Ḍuḥā, 93:6–8)

Surah al-Inshirāḥ continues in this vein, and "the opening of the chest" is counted among these blessings. This means the "spiritual relief" that God gave to the Prophet Muhammad in the face of the pressures, insults, and boycotts he was subjected to.

Logical Contradictions of the Narratives:

1. Religious contradiction: God knows in advance the person He will choose as a messenger. He would have no need to subsequently cleanse the heart of someone He has decided to choose as a messenger.

2. Physiological absurdity: The heart is a piece of flesh, and its physical cleansing has nothing to do with spiritual purity. True cleansing is the cleansing of the self and of character. Otherwise, if the heart of someone who committed evil throughout their life — like Jeffrey Epstein or Adolf Hitler — were transplanted into a good person through organ donation, that person would become evil. By the same logic, evil could have been eradicated from the world through such means.

3. The problem of repetition: Why was the "operation" performed not once but four times? Had it become contaminated again each time?

4. Internal inconsistency: It is a profound contradiction to reduce to the status of someone who needed surgery on his heart a figure whom people nearly elevated — and indeed did elevate — to the status of a deity.

The Greatest Miracle of the Quran

The Quran emphasizes that the greatest and only lasting miracle given to the Prophet Muhammad is the Quran itself:

> "Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them?" (Surah al-'Ankabūt, 29:51)

The miraculous nature of the Quran is not temporary and local, but universal and permanent. The miracles of other messengers ended at the moment they were shown. The staff of Moses no longer exists; those Jesus raised from the dead have died again. But the Quran has persisted for 14 centuries and speaks to humanity with new dimensions in every age.

The miraculous aspects of the Quran:

1. Literary perfection: It is considered the pinnacle of Arabic literature and has never been replicated.

2. Scientific signs: The universal, embryological, and other scientific signs it contains transcend their age.

3. Psychological depth: Its observations about human psychology align with the findings of modern psychology.

4. Universality: It has the capacity to speak to every age and every culture.

5. Guarantee of preservation: It is a book given a guarantee of protection by God.

Epistemological Evaluation of Miracle Narratives

The vast majority of miracle narratives found in the hadith corpus contain the following problems:

Problems of Isnād (Chain of Transmission)

1. Lack of witnesses: In most of the narrated miracles, there are no witnesses from the Prophet Muhammad's close circle.

2. Temporal contradictions: The same event is said to have occurred on different dates.

3. Problems with transmitters: Some transmitters have been found to not yet have been born or to have been very young at the time of the events.

Problems of Text (Matn)

1. Contradiction with the Quran: Most narratives contradict the clear statements of the Quran.

2. Contradiction with reason and logic: They contain claims that are physically and scientifically impossible.

3. Internal inconsistency: Different versions of the same event contradict one another.

Socio-Cultural Context

When one looks at the period in which these narratives emerged, the influence of various political and sectarian conflicts is visible. Every group attributed words and events to the Prophet Muhammad to support its own view. Miracle narratives should also be understood within this framework.

A Paradigm Shift in the Understanding of Religion

This analysis of the subject of miracles is part of a broader transformation: a return to a Quran-centered understanding of Islam. This transformation involves the following principles:

The Quran as the Sole Absolute Source

The Quran is the sole absolute, definitive, and immutable source of Islam. Even if all hadiths — fabricated after the death of the Prophet Muhammad — were accepted as

authentic, they would still represent conjecture (ẓann), and no narrative that contradicts the Quran can be accepted.

The Importance of Reason and Logic

Islam is a religion of reason. The Quran repeatedly calls for reflection and rational thought. No belief that contradicts reason and logic, or that is scientifically impossible, can be introduced into Islam.

Purification from Bid'a (Innovation) and Superstition

Bid'a and superstitions subsequently added to Islam have distanced the religion from its essence. Most miracle narratives are typical examples of these bid'a and superstitions. Islam's return to its pure source requires the cleansing of such additions.

The subject of miracles is one of the critical issues in Islamic thought that needs to be revisited. From this analysis, the following conclusions emerge:

1. Miracles Belong to God: Miracles are the manifestation of God's power, not the personal powers of messengers. Therefore, the occurrence of a miracle through a messenger confers no superiority upon that messenger.

2. The Quran Is Sufficient: The greatest miracle given to the Prophet Muhammad is the Quran. No other miracles are needed, and the Quran states this clearly.

3. Narratives Must Pass Through a Critical Filter: Miracle narratives in hadith literature must be rejected because they contradict the Quran and are incompatible with reason and logic.

4. No Distinction Is Made Among Messengers: All messengers are equal and all delivered the same message. The effort to elevate one above others contradicts the Quranic principle.

5. A Return to the Quran Is Necessary: For Islam to be properly understood, it is essential to return to the Quran and accept it as the sole absolute source.

6. The Foundation of Faith Is Not Miracles: The foundation of Islamic belief is not miracles but the rational proofs delivered by the Quran, moral values, and the message of the oneness of God.

7. Everything in the Universe Is a Sign: There is no need to seek miracles; the creation of the heavens, the earth, and the human being, the alternation of night and day — the entire universe is already a miracle (āya).

The effort to return to the essence of Islam and to purify it from bid'a and superstition is more important today than ever. This critical approach to the subject of miracles is part of the effort to transform Islam from a "religion of legends and tales" into a belief system centered on reason, logic, and the Quran. In conclusion, rather than attributing hundreds of miracles to the Prophet Muhammad, turning toward the greatest miracle he brought — the Quran — understanding it and living by

it, is the requirement of true Islam. For the real miracle is the message that transforms the individual, changes society, and brings justice, compassion, and wisdom. And that message is in the Quran.

Vaccine and Treatment Opposition: An Analysis of Injustice from an Islamic Perspective

In the modern age, movements opposing medical advancements — particularly vaccines and treatment methods — are becoming increasingly widespread. This opposition is fueled by conspiracy theories, unscientific claims, and disinformation spreading rapidly through social media, turning into a serious threat to public health. From an Islamic perspective, this stance is not merely a personal preference; rather, it falls into the category of injustice (zulm) from both religious and moral standpoints.

The Sanctity of Life and the Prohibition of Self-Harm

One of Islam's foundational principles is that human life is sacred and must be protected as a trust. The Quran expresses this principle clearly:

"Do not kill yourselves. Indeed, Allah is ever Merciful to you." (An-Nisa, 29)

This verse is not merely a prohibition against suicide; it also emphasizes that a person must avoid any behavior that endangers their own health. Viewing the body as a trust is central to Islam's understanding of the human being. A person is not the absolute owner of their body, but rather a steward entrusted with it. Properly caring for, protecting, and preserving this trust is a religious responsibility. In today's world, consciously rejecting a proven, effective, and safe treatment or vaccine constitutes a betrayal of this trust. Especially when contagious and deadly diseases are involved, failing to use available means of protection is an injustice a person commits against themselves. Modern medical science has developed methods of disease prevention through centuries of research and clinical studies involving millions of people. Ignoring this body of scientific knowledge is a stance contrary to reason and wisdom.

The Principle of Not Leaning Toward Injustice and Social Responsibility

The Quran does not limit opposition to injustice merely to refraining from direct wrongdoing; it also strictly forbids leaning toward wrongdoers or supporting them:

"And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire, and you would not have other than Allah any protectors; then you would not be helped." (Hud, 113)

The concept of "inclining" in this verse is extremely significant. It does not refer to committing injustice directly, but rather to showing favor toward the wrongdoer, siding with them, or approving of their actions. Therefore, supporting anti-vaccine and anti-treatment narratives, sharing or spreading such views, constitutes leaning toward injustice even without directly committing it.

So in what sense is vaccine opposition a form of injustice? The Arabic word zulm means "to displace something from its rightful position, to usurp rights." Attempting

to deprive people of scientifically proven treatments is a usurpation of their right to live healthily. This usurpation becomes even more pronounced when herd immunity is at stake. Herd immunity forms when a sufficient proportion of a population is vaccinated, preventing the spread of disease. This protects the most vulnerable — infants who cannot yet be vaccinated, cancer patients with suppressed immune systems, the elderly, and the chronically ill. Spreading anti-vaccine sentiment and obstructing the formation of herd immunity is a direct injustice against this vulnerable segment. Parents who refuse to vaccinate their child endanger not only their own child but also unvaccinated infants in their surroundings. This transcends the boundaries of individual choice and becomes a matter of collective responsibility.

The Warning Against Following in Satan's Footsteps

The Quran describes in detail how Satan misleads people, one of his methods being to make evil appear attractive and to draw people onto wrong paths:

"O you who have believed, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan — indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing." (An-Nur, 21)

Following in Satan's footsteps is not limited to committing obvious sins. It also encompasses creating chaos in society, turning people against one another, spreading ignorance, and obscuring truth. The conspiracy theories, unscientific claims, and fear-mongering that spread through social media today fall squarely into this category.

Anti-vaccine narratives are content that lacks scientific grounding, relies on emotional manipulation, and aims to generate fear and distrust. Entirely baseless claims such as "vaccines contain poison," "vaccines cause autism," or "vaccines are a government tool to control people" spread by exploiting people's fears and doubts. The spread of such disinformation causes panic, erodes trust in the healthcare system, and leads to the re-emergence of preventable diseases. Setting aside the findings of scientists accumulated through years of research and instead believing a random video found on the internet means abandoning reason and wisdom. The Quran consistently encourages thinking, inquiry, and rational reflection. Questions like "Will you not reflect?" and "Will you not reason?" draw people away from intellectual laziness and blind imitation. Rejecting science and expert opinion in favor of conspiracy theories is an abdication of this rational responsibility.

Individual Choice or Social Responsibility?

One of the most common arguments made by vaccine opponents is the "my body, my choice" reasoning. However, when contagious diseases are involved, this argument loses its validity. A person's decision not to be vaccinated affects not only themselves but also those around them. The risk of contracting and transmitting an infectious disease exceeds the bounds of individual choice and becomes a matter of social responsibility.

Islamic law articulates the principle of harm very clearly: "There shall be no harm and no reciprocating harm." If a person's own decision carries the potential to harm

others, that decision can no longer be viewed as a purely individual preference. Especially during epidemic periods, protecting public health takes precedence over individual hesitation. This is a requirement of Islam's principle of maslaha (public interest).

The concept of herd immunity is critically important here. When a certain proportion of a population — generally 90 to 95 percent — is vaccinated, disease can no longer spread and the entire community is protected. This protective umbrella is of vital importance especially for those who cannot be vaccinated: newborns who are too young for certain vaccines; cancer patients, organ transplant recipients, and AIDS patients whose immune systems are suppressed; and individuals with genetic conditions or allergies who cannot be vaccinated at all. Herd immunity is the only means of protecting these vulnerable individuals. Spreading anti-vaccine sentiment and causing this protective shield to be breached is a direct injustice against the weakest link. Even if someone says "I am only deciding for my own health," in the context of a contagious disease that decision affects others as well. Regardless of intent, if the consequence of one's action carries the potential to harm others, this creates a religious and moral responsibility.

The Harmony of Science and Religion: The Balance of Reason and Revelation

Throughout Islamic intellectual history, science and religion have never been seen as being in conflict. On the contrary, understanding the information the Quran provides about the universe and humanity requires scientific inquiry. Historically, Islamic civilization broke new ground in medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and chemistry, laying the foundations of modern science. Ibn Sina's medical encyclopedia, the Canon of Medicine, was used as a textbook in Europe for centuries. Al-Razi researched the mechanisms by which infectious diseases spread and laid the groundwork for quarantine practices. Islamic scholars never confused tawakkul (reliance on God) with laziness and irresponsibility; on the contrary, they regarded seeking treatment and taking precautions as a religious requirement.

Today, certain groups take a stance against science under a religious guise. Yet this attitude is consistent neither with the spirit of Islam nor with its historical practice. Medical matters must be addressed with scientific and medical evidence, not with ideological or emotional reactions. An approach that places the Quranic principle of protecting life at its center will naturally support solutions that prioritize human health.

Disinformation and Sedition (Fitna)

One of the greatest problems of the modern age is the pollution of information and the spread of disinformation. With the proliferation of social media, false information spreads faster than ever before, causing serious harm in society. Conspiracy theories, fake news, and unscientific claims circulating in the health domain drive people away from treatment and lead to the re-emergence of preventable diseases.

In the Quran, the concept of fitna carries the meanings of creating unrest in society, turning people against one another, and sowing chaos and confusion. Much of the

anti-vaccine discourse falls precisely into this category of fitna: dismissing scientific consensus to instill fear and doubt in people, stoking distrust toward the healthcare system, and creating polarization and conflict within society.

Islam places a great responsibility on speech and the dissemination of information. The verse "And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge" (Al-Isra, 36) emphasizes that a person should not speak on matters about which they have no knowledge. A person who has not received medical training, conducted research, or understood the depths of the subject attempting to guide others based on a few false pieces of information found online is in violation of this verse. Critically examining every video and every claim encountered on social media, questioning sources, and learning the views of scientific authorities is a responsibility. Sharing information without being certain of its accuracy means becoming complicit in the spread of that information and the harm it causes.

Protecting the Weakest Link: Justice and Compassion

One of Islam's core values is protecting the most vulnerable segments of society. Safeguarding the rights of and caring for vulnerable groups — orphans, the poor, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled — is a testament to the importance Islam places on social justice. The matter of herd immunity should be evaluated within exactly this framework. Groups such as infants who cannot be vaccinated, patients with suppressed immunity, and elderly individuals with chronic conditions can be protected through the vaccination of other members of society. The shield of herd immunity is an umbrella of compassion that protects this vulnerable link from disease. Spreading vaccine opposition and punching holes in this umbrella is an injustice committed against the most defenseless.

In a society, the strong protecting the weak, the healthy considering the sick, and the privileged looking out for the rights of the underprivileged is a requirement of Islam's understanding of solidarity and brotherhood. The verse "Indeed, the believers are brothers" (Al-Hujurat, 10) expresses not only a religious bond but also a social responsibility. This brotherhood requires caring for one another's health, safety, and well-being.

Means and Intent: Responsibility for Consequences

In Islamic jurisprudence, the concept of wasila (means) holds an important place. A wasila is an instrument or cause that leads to an outcome. Even if an action does not cause harm directly, if it serves as a means to a harmful outcome, that action carries responsibility. Refusing vaccination or encouraging others not to vaccinate may, even if not directly harming anyone, serve as a means to the spread of disease.

Even if someone says "I do not intend to harm anyone; I am simply making a decision about my own body," if they carry an infectious disease and pose a risk of transmission, the outcome of their action is harmful regardless of their intent. In Islam, intention matters — but outcomes cannot be disregarded either. Being a means to the spread of disease generates responsibility. Especially during epidemic periods, one person's decision not to be vaccinated can trigger a chain effect. For

every individual from whom the disease spreads originating from that person, the initial decision served as a wasila. For this reason, when contagious diseases are involved, individual choices must be assessed together with their social consequences.

The Quran's overarching message places the protection of life, standing against injustice, using reason, and fulfilling social responsibility at its center. Within this framework:

- Opposing vaccines and treatment is an injustice committed against the body that has been entrusted to a person. Endangering human life is explicitly prohibited in An-Nisa, verse 29.

- Supporting or spreading vaccine opposition falls under the prohibition in Hud, verse 113, of "leaning toward those who do wrong." Being instrumental in usurping others' right to health carries a responsibility equivalent to committing direct injustice.

- Spreading unscientific claims and conspiracy theories falls into the category of "following in Satan's footsteps" as described in An-Nur, verse 21. Creating chaos, distrust, and misdirection in society entails a grave moral responsibility.

- Obstructing the formation of herd immunity means abandoning the protection of the most vulnerable link in society. This conflicts with Islam's understanding of justice and compassion.

What a Muslim individual is required to do is as follows:

- In medical matters, heed the views of scientific authorities; be humble and open to learning in areas where one is not an expert.

- Critically evaluate health claims encountered on social media, research sources, and refrain from sharing unverified information.

- Raise public awareness about vaccination and treatment, inform people accurately, and stand against anti-science narratives.

- View the protection of one's own health and contributing to public health as a religious responsibility.

- Looking out for the rights of the weak and vulnerable and contributing to their protection is a requirement of Islam's understanding of social solidarity.

In conclusion, Islam's principles of protecting life, standing against injustice, using reason, and fulfilling social responsibility call for a stance that supports a scientific approach to vaccination and treatment, safeguards public health, and embraces accountability — in the present day. This stance is not merely a religious requirement; it is also a human and moral imperative.

The Birthday of Our Prophet Muhammad and the Mawlid Kandil

Islam is defined as a belief system based on revelation. At the center of this belief

system stand the Quran and the life of our Prophet Muhammad. However, certain issues in Islamic history have remained subjects of debate from the past to the present. Among the foremost of these debates is the question of our Prophet Muhammad's birthday and the Mawlid Kandil, which marks the celebration of his birth. These debates are fueled both by the insufficiency of historical data and by deeper questions about how religious traditions have taken shape over time.

Historical Uncertainty Regarding the Birth Date of Our Prophet Muhammad

The Widely Accepted Date: 12 Rabi al-Awwal

According to the view widely accepted among the public and in traditional belief, our Prophet Muhammad was born on Monday, April 20, 571 CE — corresponding to the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal in the Hijri calendar — in what is known as the Year of the Elephant. This date has been broadly accepted by Islamic scholars and historians over the centuries and has earned a significant place in the religious calendar. However, it is not possible to find a direct and reliable hadith source or early historical document to support the accuracy of this date.

Narrations Suggesting Different Dates

When traditionalist literature is examined, it becomes clear that there are divergent views regarding the birth date of our Prophet Muhammad. Some narrations put forward the 8th of Rabi al-Awwal, while others mention different days within the month of Rabi al-Awwal or even entirely different months. This situation clearly demonstrates that the date in question is not grounded in an uncontested historical document, but is rather the product of a consensus that formed in later tradition.

The Hijri Calendar and the Challenges of Calculation

The Hijri Calendar was officially established during the caliphate of Umar in the 17th year after the Hijra and began to be used to measure time in an orderly fashion in the Islamic world. However, the fact that this calendar was arranged approximately forty years after the birth of our Prophet Muhammad makes calculations regarding his birth date even more difficult. Therefore, whether the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal carries any historical accuracy depends not only on narrations but also on calendar calculations.

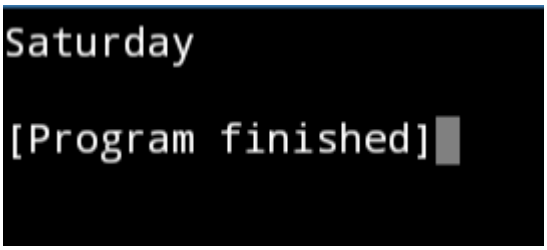
Comparison with the Gregorian Calendar: The Calculation Debate

Traditionalist literature conveys that the birth of our Prophet Muhammad took place on Monday, April 20, 571 CE. Many sources emphasize that the birth occurred on Monday morning, presenting this detail as evidence for the accuracy of the date. However, when modern calendar calculations are performed and the following code is run, it becomes apparent that April 20, 571 CE corresponds to a Saturday — not a Monday — according to the Gregorian Calendar.

python

```
import datetime
```

```
# Create the given date

date = datetime.datetime(571, 4, 20)

# Get the day of the week

day_of_week = date.strftime("%A")

print(day_of_week)
```



This calculation lays bare just how fragile and lacking in certainty the historical sources are. If even which day of the week a given date falls on is disputed, then the reliability of the confidence placed in that date itself must be called into question. This contradiction clearly illustrates how historical information can transform over time and how narrations are reshaped through the interpretations of later generations.

The Historical Origins of Mawlid Kandil

Was There a Mawlid Celebration in the Early Period of Islam?

Mawlid Kandil refers to the ceremonies and celebrations organized to commemorate the birth of our Prophet Muhammad. However, historical evidence clearly shows that these celebrations did not exist either during the lifetime of our Prophet Muhammad or throughout the generation of the Companions. There is no narration of our Prophet Muhammad himself celebrating his own birthday. Similarly, there is no record of the four great caliphs or leading Companions holding any such celebration.

The Emergence of Mawlid on the Historical Scene

The majority of historians hold the view that organized Mawlid celebrations first emerged in Egypt during the Fatimid dynasty, around the 4th century AH. These celebrations gradually spread, took different forms in different regions, and became a deeply rooted tradition among the people. However, these celebrations are a practice that has no basis in the original sources — they are a later innovation.

The Bid'ah Debate

In Islamic jurisprudence, the concept of "bid'ah" refers to new practices that have no basis in religion and generally carries a negative connotation. Mawlid celebrations have historically stood at the very center of bid'ah debates. Many scholars —

particularly those who hold that the Quran is sufficient, as well as Salafi and Wahhabi scholars — demonstrate that Mawlid celebrations have no foundation in the religion.

The Quran: The Enduring Legacy of Our Prophet Muhammad

At the heart of all these historical and jurisprudential debates lies the following fundamental truth: the greatest and most enduring legacy our Prophet Muhammad left to humanity is the Quran, which was formed through the compilation of the revelation he received from Allah. The Quran is the uncontested and immutable point of reference for Islam. Whether a birth date falls on a particular day of the week, or the celebratory traditions that took shape in later centuries, can never overshadow the central position of the Quran. From this perspective, many scholars emphasize that the finest way to honor our Prophet Muhammad is to keep his message alive. Rather than celebrating his birthday, holding fast to the revelation he brought may be regarded as the most sincere and meaningful expression of love for him.

The birth date of our Prophet Muhammad remains a question with no definitive historical answer. While the 12th of Rabi al-Awwal has become established as a traditional consensus through a long process, it cannot be supported by direct historical evidence. The inconsistencies revealed by modern calendar calculations further expose how fragile a foundation the existing narrations rest upon. As for Mawlid Kandil, it is a historical fact that this celebration did not exist in the early period of Islam and is a practice that took shape among the people in later centuries. This clearly demonstrates how religious practices have changed over time and how different understandings emerged in different periods of Islamic society. For Muslims, what is truly determinative is not historical uncertainties or later-formed traditions, but the Quran entrusted to humanity by our Prophet Muhammad and the divine message it carries at its core. Grounding religious practices in sound sources and not accepting tradition without question is also in complete harmony with the principle embraced by the first generations of Islam.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muhammed Rıdvan Kaya was born in 1991, though his exact birth date is unknown; according to official records, he was born on October 10, 1992, in the İdil district of Şırnak. His official records list his place of birth as the Dargeçit district of Mardin.

Kaya bases his faith solely on the Quran, having developed a Quran-centered understanding in accordance with the verses stating that the Quran is a complete, detailed, and fully sufficient guide. In line with this approach, his work titled "Return to the Source: The Qur'an and Religion." calls upon people to turn directly to Allah's revelation rather than human sources such as schools of jurisprudence, hadiths, tafsir, and religious catechisms. The author argues that no work written in the name of religion — however respected — originates from Allah, and therefore cannot be accepted as absolute truth. For every human being is capable of error; only Allah is infallible, and only His revelation is trustworthy. For this reason, religious sources must be questioned and texts must be filtered through reason. One must not blindly submit to any authority; every word should be listened to carefully and the best of it followed:

> "Those who listen to the Word and follow the best of it — those are the ones Allah has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding." (Surah Az-Zumar, Verse 18)

With this questioning approach and by holding firmly to the rope of Allah (Âl-i Imran 103), the author encourages Muslims to turn to the Quran:

> "And hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided." (Surah Âl-i Imran, Verse 103)

Return to the Source: The Quran and Religion is a work that is not sold for commercial purposes, carries no copyright, and belongs to everyone who reads it. The author is also openly opposed to the mentality that turns religious knowledge into a source of profit. In this context, as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 79, he warns against those who write with their own hands and then sell it by saying "This is from Allah":

> "Woe to those who write the scripture with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,' in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn." (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 79)

The author emphasizes that those who explain or teach religion are also not infallible. Otherwise, a person unknowingly makes their own desires their god:

> "Have you seen the one who takes his own desire as his god? And whom Allah has led astray based on knowledge, sealing his hearing and heart and placing a cover over his sight — who then can guide him after Allah? Will you not then take heed?" (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Verse 23)

He reminds that everyone must question their own soul, citing Surah Yusuf, Verse 53:

> "I do not acquit myself — indeed the soul is inclined toward evil, except when my Lord bestows His mercy. Surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful." (Surah Yusuf, Verse 53)

In conclusion, Muhammed Rıdvan Kaya's belief and call are clear: The only infallible source is the Quran. All religious texts outside the Quran are of human origin and must be questioned. This book and all other books not revealed by Allah are poison. The only true antidote is the Quran alone:

> "Indeed, it is a reminder for you and your people, and you will all be questioned." (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Verse 44)